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Selected Poems

Dora Greenwell



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SELECTED POEMS

FROM THE WRITINGS OF

DORA GREENWELL

These are the many-coloured beads of life.
Blame me not, gentle reader, if their hues
Should please thee little, for I did but choose
And thread them where I found them, by the strife
Of Time's great ocean cast upon the shore ;
Stay thou with me awhile and tell them o'er.

Selected Poems

FROM THE WRITINGS OF

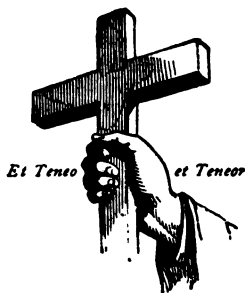
Dora Greenwell

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

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PREFACE

THIRTY years after an author ceases to write is generally about the earliest opportunity that a true appreciation can be made of his worth to the world. The Rev. Alan Greenwell has kindly allowed me to re-edit his sister's poems at discretion, and I now offer them to the public. That the first volume must consist of *Carmina Crucis* whole and entire there could be no doubt, for there we have the very gem and jewel of her thought. This, the second volume, is more complex, and needs a little explanation.

Miss Greenwell first published a slender book of poems in 1848, when she was twenty-seven years of age ; and these verses, though doubtless up to the average level of her time, are worth but little, and only two have been here preserved. By 1861 her mind had matured and a far better volume was brought out, of which eighteen poems are here given. In 1867 she had reached the midsummer of her life, which was characterised by a rare wealth of thought and feeling ; and the volume then published contains many a blossom we would not willingly let die, and of these twenty more are added. Her crowning year, the year of *Carmina Crucis*, was 1869. In 1873 she wrote the eight *Songs of Salvation*, which describe the practical application of faith to the lives of the simple and the partially educated ; and they have been

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loved of many who knew not the author's name. These are here given entire; and they show so different a side of her varied and wonderful mind, that they are placed at the end with some words of separate introduction. In 1873 she also wrote *The Soul's Legend*, a small book consisting chiefly of three mysterious prose-poems which are here given in full; and, finally, with the first shortening of the days of her all too brief and lovely summer of the soul, we have in 1876 *Camera Obscura*, a book perhaps not ill-named, and of the poems in it I have selected eight. Beside these, a few more scattered verses have been collected—some from a children's book called *Home Thoughts and Home Scenes*, which was a joint production with Miss Ingelow, Miss Edwards, and other writers, and some from the fugitive literature of her time.

There they are, sixty-six pieces in all, not in the first rank of poetry, and yet not to be permitted to sink out of sight and die. They are full of thought, and are, as it seems to me, more useful to our age than to that in which they were written. They have keen spiritual insight, and they are absolutely sincere; and these are great virtues.

The illustrations are her own choice, and are taken from *Carmina Crucis*.

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INTRODUCTION

IT is assuredly by her prose works and not by her poems that Dora Greenwell will live; and it was by a strange mistake that during her life-time both her own attention and that of her friends was concentrated chiefly on her verse. Her prose holds a place unique; each book as a whole may lack order and coherence, and yet the texture of which it is woven throughout is most rare. She speaks on subjects seldom spoken of, and shows herself at home on high and dangerous places, and yet her heart is ever with the pure and the simple and the home-like. Her prose style has in it a distinction that is difficult to analyse, poetic and yet austere, with a charm all its own. Her verses on the other hand are often careless. We may catch the same thoughts, and yet the difference of their dress makes them appear to

be of less rank and dignity than is their right. But while we turn page after page, not knowing where to settle in the thicket of words, we are overlooking some hidden flowers, and these it is my present endeavour to bring to light. The garden truly has run to waste, but here and there is a beautiful passion-flower or a handful of lilies that must not be allowed to fade and die unrecognised. Moreover, all her verses, bad and good, represent phases of an inner life that is worth recording.

While outwardly her life was uneventful, it was within full of experiences of a vivid and lofty character, and of these a collection of her poems forms a fairly complete account. If we would paint a picture we cannot omit the shadows, and not only are the conquests here recorded, but some also of those struggles that went near to end in defeat. Perhaps the most marked examples are to be found in *Carmina Crucis*, but there are others of the same kind here. Hers was no easy path of sunshine and security, but a toilsome climb pursued against the whispers of doubt and the allurements of a too-ready sympathy with the weakness and the indolence of the human heart. "The poet is a

man who sympathises with men," she writes in *Liber Humanitatis*, "and the theologian is a man who sympathises with God. Each keenly feels a want of harmony and perfection in the present order of created things and beings. But while the poet's ardent and irritable feelings are wrung and tortured by the view of outward discord, the Christian's submissive heart is oppressed by the deep alienation caused by inward sin. In other words the poet is inclined to cast blame on God, and the Christian to take it upon himself." Here she stood with a hand given to each. She was a poet in every fibre of her being, and even though want of training made defective the actual verses she wrote, she was always responsive to "feeling with its sweet enharmonic note, keen and vibrant even to pain, strung beyond its highest pitch of rapture, lowered beyond its lowest depth of woe." And as surely it may be granted that she was a theologian, one of the few woman-theologians the world has seen. The lofty tone of her prose works and the distinction of her style show that the combination of these two characters may be a happy one for the literary result produced, but her life shows

that it is not happy for the heart that harbours such conflicting sympathies, for it is torn by sorrows that can only be humbly followed at a distance by minds less nobly equipped. The courage of ignorance may bring high results by its very limitations, but in the eyes of those who see over a wider range, the triumphs won against the fearful odds of knowledge are by far the more glorious.

There is a quotation that occurs several times in her books,—

“The spirit of man wins heights that it is not competent to keep,”

and this is a concise wording of her strong conviction that the soul usually goes forward in the spiritual life with no even assured pace, but by leaps and bounds. The wonder and inspiration of a moment of true insight is granted from above, and is like the clear leap of the eye's vision over mountain river and morass, away into infinity. The manacles and fetters drop off, and time, space, change, and death are as nothing. But to see is not to possess, and the soul must come down, and by tasked obedience and patient stooping toil must struggle to fill in the missing steps with a solid pathway

that will bear the weight of life. Before this verification of the vision is anything like accomplished, the trumpet-call comes, and the soul again bounds forward and further than before, and stands for one half-hour ringed with heaven, and with the world only visible through the cloud-rifts beneath her feet; and then once more the light fades, the vision is withdrawn, and she must go down again to the unfinished pathway, and handle the rough stones and heavy blocks of actual life, doubtful if ever by this slow and weary work she will attain to the golden heights of freedom that were promised.

After this fashion was her own mental and spiritual progress pursued, and it leaves its impress on her verse, as well as on portions of her marvellous prose work. Her home is, as it were, in two places; partly on the heights above, free and disencumbered of the body, and partly beset with the toils and the thousand difficulties of the vale below. Unusually beset, for she had depressing ill-health, and the dead weight of it bore her down often for long together. Possibly this is not the ideal method of progress in the spiritual life, as certainly it was a perplexing one for her friends, who never

had any security as to where they should find her. But this was never true in the sphere of her affection; there she was always loyal, steady, and overflowing with a kind of radiant generosity that is rare to meet with. Otherwise, in thought, she was not secure for long together, but "herb ist des Lebens innerster Kern," and we must each be allowed to take our own way with it, and this way was hers.

The alternations are, as we have seen, especially marked in *Carmina Crucis*, but we find them here again before us. The land of Beulah in which we walked in the splendid triumph of *Veni, Veni, Emanuel* is now a matter of faith and not of sight, for the mists of the lower ground begin to close over us as we follow her footsteps, and the hills are at times obscured. The early poems seem to be more carefully written than some of the later, and *The Eternal Now* and *Pencil-Marks in a Book of Devotion* are good both in thought and in expression. Again in such poems as *Faint, yet Pursuing* and *The Soul's Parting* she is back on the mount of Vision, and the words that come to us from thence are encouraging, a treasure to be kept in heart and memory against the evil day. Of

all her poems her own favourite is said to have been *Pax in Novissimo*, a thing hauntingly beautiful, a sketch laid in with what artists call "a reserve of the palette," suggesting an atmosphere of silence and peace by its subdued colouring. It is the reverie of one who is called to "sleep at noon," and who sits on a moss-cushioned stone reviewing the past without haste and without regret. It is full of gentleness like the freshness and quiet of mid-summer morning in a forest. The events of life, whether harsh or kindly, come crowding back to the memory asking, "Friends, friends? do we part as friends?" and the soul sends back a satisfied answer in the echo of a single word, "Friends." The relation to Nature has been in its way perfect from childhood on, but yet from her the soul parts in quiet sorrow that it has loved so ineffectively and known so little of this beautiful Nurse and patient Teacher of our long infancy on earth. The relation to God has not been perfect at all, for there have been many rebellious tears over hard lessons, and Christ the Brother has often in days past had to question with severe speech and to delay His welcome, that He may bring the slack con-

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science and the idle heart up to the line of duty. But checks and shadows are over now, and because the goal is well-nigh won Heavenly Love need no longer refrain itself, but may spread out its arms in unclouded welcome home. And so it ends with the picture of a child sent up to sleep at noon,—

“All household noises cease,
No voices call me from without ; the room
Is hushed and darkened round me ; through the
 gloom
One friend beloved keeps moving to and fro
With step so quiet, oft I only know
Her presence by her gentle breathing,—Peace.”

In this poem we have also, I think, the first intimation of that high value set on the message given by Nature that is seen so markedly in later verses such as *The Homeward Lane* and *The Almond Bough*, verses that are rendered obscure by a cloud of intangible feeling. One may weary a little of this, and the quaint ruggedly-told story of *The Man with the Three Friends* is very refreshing as it rises again into the region of the definite and the clear.

The Soul's Legend deserves especial study, for in it we find both the Philosopher and the Poet triumphing over the Saint, and she is

down again in the depths, walking step by step with pain as she sings a song "ancient and pitiful." The three prose-poems that form the bulk of this strange little book are all given here, because, though they follow in outline something of the same story, they reveal an attitude not given so clearly elsewhere. In each case there is a tale of subtle charm and drowsy half-savage imagery, and beneath it there is a rebellious spirit awake and active, a spirit that we feel is, like a sleeping lion, always there in the mind of the writer, save in the moments of highest insight. So profound is her love of human nature even as it is, so deep is her well of compassion for its weakness and of tears for its woes, so strong is her sympathy with all the immeasurable ills to which flesh is heir, and the assaults to which the soul is subject through the body as well as through the reason or the affections, that it seems at times as if her pity burst all restraints and sprang upward in a wild lament of antagonism against the conditions of our life on earth both outer and inner. In such a mood faith and duty are both of them hard and grievous, and to follow Christ needs an almost impossible restraint and

denial of the natural instincts. Why is He so cold and irresponsible to three-fourths of the desires of that human nature He came to save? Why is earth so attractive, and heaven so dim and far? Why be tied down to the snow-white of Christian ethics, when glorious, full, passionate, rainbow-coloured life calls to us through beauty and adventure? Over and over again she turns the same thoughts though they are often but dimly expressed, or even told by omissions rather than by direct words. Now and then the rebellion rises to the surface, as in *Desolate, yet not Forsaken*, where we have the woman stolen as a child by a savage tribe, and only late in life sent for home by the messenger of peace. She listens indeed to his tale, but there is a world of meaning in her scornful reply,—

“And if I were indeed, as thou sayest, the daughter of a chief so mighty, how came I as an infant to be abandoned by all?”

“If I were lost, it were strange that I were so long unsought for; and if I were forsaken by my father, then it is I who have to forgive.”

Again in *Christus et Ecclesia* the heart of the writer seems to be overcharged with pity for the Church who was affianced to be the bride of

the Man Divine before the worlds were made,—

“For her truly He died once, but how often hath she died for Him?”

And again, like a whisper from the tempter, comes the suggestion,—

“If hers was the glory of the union, had she indeed all the gain?”

“Is it well with the rough frieze frayed and fretted with the costly inwrought thread of gold?”

“With the frail jar of porcelain in which an acorn lies buried; with the soul that travails with a mighty incessant birth?”

“Is it well with the life that is dear unto one that is distant, and hated by the many that are near?”

These are strong words, and they find an answering echo in almost every heart. The miserable and the desolate may not understand them, but the young and strong and energetic know the inner debate well, though it may never reach the surface in words. Those who would walk with God find their nature on the one hand too varied and full, and on the other hand too poor and too slightly endowed for so high an alliance, and there are many falls and many sorrows in the effort. There is in us an element of simple infirmity that seems to demand com-

passion rather than mere blame. It is inwrought into our being just as physical weariness may be. The impossibility of sustained spiritual aspiration and the violent reactions that accompany it, the revenge taken by those portions of our nature that for awhile have been starved or suppressed, the triumph of the body over the soul in illness, the decline from divine to human love, the delight in exercising power over others, the desire for expansion for every part of our being, the wild longing after experiment and adventure rather than movement along a safe and trodden path,—such are some of those defects and capacities latent within us that so often cripple and spoil the growth of the life of God in the soul of man. If sin consists in “knowing the better and choosing the worse,” then these lapses scarcely come under that heading. And yet sin is subtly entwined with them all, for we are not clear from spiritual indolence, foolish indulgences, thoughts that roam toward self-exaltation, and the sale of our birthright time and again for one morsel of meat. Were the element of sin taken out of it, the way would be cleared, and He who made our frame, mental and emotional as well as

physical, knows what it can bear and what it cannot. All this our author knew, and she knew it by the bitter method of default as well as by the glorious presage of satisfaction.

Perhaps I may seem to be reading too much thought into these simple poems, but were her prose works, her private letters, both published and unpublished, and the reminiscences of her younger friends who are still living, laid before the reader, he could not but assent. These particular poems are, as it were, but buds and shoots from a root deep hidden in her mind, permanently there, and which found but partial and fragmentary expression.

All three of the stories we are now considering end with the human element finding peace and recognition in the divine, and yet there is some lack of that repentant humility, that complete abnegation of self, that is the note of redemption. It may be only in the manner of the telling, and yet it strikes a strange note on the heart which has known the touch of Christ. It is as if the tales were told by a sympathetic observer, but not by the bride herself, not by one who sees beneath the surface and remembers the noble and faithful wooing on the one hand,

and the self-will and coldness on the other, which has for so long checked and baffled the advances of Heaven. Only those within the circle can know the secret of the Lord, and all others misjudge and defame, and there is something almost terrible in seeing one who knows so much step even for a moment outside the line, and place herself beside the critic rather than the lover. For the sake of Humanity as a whole it has to be done, for the dangers of every situation are better faced than ignored, and yet the individual suffers. This attitude rises to a height that almost transcends its own intention in a short poem called *The Playmates*. Twin brothers are there represented, the Real Self, and the Natural Man, and they are friends in a rough and ready fashion until word comes from the King supreme, that one or other of the two must die. The Natural Self dies, and the Real Self, though now he is admitted to drink of the new wine of the Kingdom of Heaven, spends hours of musing on the sweet, wild, unhampered companionship which he has lost, and thinks it is possible that the present joys have been too dearly purchased. Is, then, the voice of the whole Church militant to be

stultified, when it speaks in tones of magnificent satisfaction of laying down the lower life to gain the higher? The solemn words, "I am crucified with Christ," have rung down the centuries, and have been repeated in tones both meditative and exultant, and the suggestion of "Pity thyself" has been left to the enemy. Our writer knows this well, and knows, too, the way of escape, as her unflinching adherence to the Cross testifies. It is, as it were, a dramatic and one-sided, rather than a real and final expression. Every man should be allowed to plead his own cause; and with transparent sincerity she speaks for the artist and the poet who were often stirring within her. Her soul is utterly free from cant, and the good and the bad are shown with equal clearness; you have the whole, there is nothing slurred over, nothing hollow or empty, no spaces to be accounted for which may be store-rooms belonging to the enemy. You have the whole, and there is nothing worse that is left unsaid. The ideal faith is not, as many people tell us, that of the child or the peasant,—a faith that is necessarily founded in part on ignorance; but a faith of a yet higher quality is found in the mind that

knows and yet persists in its hold, rare though it may be. Dora Greenwell knew. She did not shun the books of her time, and a very difficult time it was for the creed of such an analytical spirit as hers. She read Colenso, John Stuart Mill, and *Essays and Reviews*, and she studied Auguste Comte and Positivism. Her faith was no inherited or easy thing; though evidently won in early youth, and doubtless won in all simplicity, it was subsequently maintained inch by inch at the bayonet's point as each new threatening opposition entered her mind, and the victory is full of hope and cheer for those who come after. It was a victory gained by no fictions, but by a soul which forced its way through detaining suggestions and overwhelming sympathy, straight to the Saviour. She saw things in their true proportions, and nothing could keep her from flying straight to the centre of life. Verses such as *Go and Come* are full of heavenly confidence, and *The Song that none but the Redeemed can sing* shows us the world-wearied and battered warriors at last in sight of that Home where the strain of faith is relaxed in vision. "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him."

Full contentment dawns in glowing streaks
after the long and stormy night, and then the
glorious Sun arises with healing on His wings.

“With banners faded from their early pride,
Through mist and sun and showers of bleaching
rain,
Yet red in all our garments doubly dyed
With many a wound upon us, many a stain,
We came with steps that faltered, *Yet we came!*”

Although usually wandering in these high regions, our writer does not live apart from the stirring interests of her time. The war between North and South threatens in America, and she sends her greeting to the free North in *The Cleft*, a fine song, and one that makes for righteousness rather than for peace, with an energy that is almost savage in its recklessness of consequences. She had truly learnt the world's first lesson, that there are principles of supreme worth, and causes on which human life is well thrown away. Again she went by sympathy into the horrors of the Cotton-famine, and this has left its impress on *The Dialogue*, among the pieces here given. Again, there were at this time certain miserable children, whose condition struck from her soul sparks of red-hot indignation. They were called the

Gang-Children, and a Member of Parliament had advocated the system of employing them in agricultural labour to the detriment of both soul and body. The verses she wrote in reply are the voice of a true woman lifted up against the invasion of her citadel—home. In the world of literary and social criticism *The Saturday Review* at this time held its court of judgment and affected to be supreme, and she hated its cold sneers at all that was altruistic and kind, and at all effort on behalf of the simple and the small. Till one reads her trenchant lines in a satire called by the name of the magazine, one would hardly believe her gifted with so much fighting force. It is very clever. That she was independent we know, but we did not know before that she could be sarcastic, or that she was so familiar with the popular interests of her day as to know the names of two famous pugilists.

But there were lighter and happier moments in her life. The sense of humour is so strong in her letters that each faded leaf as it is unfolded causes one's heart to leap in expectation lest, like a child playing hide-and-seek, her radiant spirit should suddenly spring out from

- behind the words and meet one face to face ; but this has scarcely left a trace on her verses. Yet she dearly loved children, and could write well about *Going to Bed* and *Noah's Ark*, and picture the little child leading the long procession of animals on the safe warm dining-room carpet, till we might think we were in the enchanted childhood of Robert Louis Stevenson. The prose-poem *The Little Companions* gives another side of the young life, for the silent ache of desolation of the child wandering alone amid the wealth of an autumn garden in all its splendour of colour and sunshine, of flower and fruit, is, I think, a sketch that few could have drawn with so masterly a hand. Above all things she loved her friends, and poured upon them a wealth of generous appreciation and affectionate praise that is embodied in many Valentines and other verses. The lines *Oh, hast thou won my heart ?* are addressed to Mrs Thomas Constable, and are among the best of them. A strain of carelessness runs through a great deal of her verse, an imperfection in the handling that prevents her thought from finding its true body of expression, but by careful search we shall discover treasures. One little

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Introduction

poem of two verses at any rate is good throughout, a very triumph of simplicity, and of that suggestive charm that ever leaves the greater part unsaid, and that is entitled *Home*. This author has added something to the ever-increasing and splendid heritage of the English race, and we must not lose her. She is our friend, and we will bid her welcome.



Selected Poems



“As we journeyed sadly through a place
Obscure and mean, we lighted on the trace
Of Thy fresh footprints, and a whisper clear
Fell on our spirits. Thou Thyself wert near ;
And from Thy servants’ hearts Thy name adored
Broke forth in fire ; we said, ‘It is the Lord.’”

I
Poems published in 1861

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THE SOUL'S PARTING

SHE sat within Life's Banquet Hall at noon,
When word was brought unto her secretly :
"The Master cometh onwards quickly ; soon
Across the Threshold He will call for thee."
Then she rose up to meet Him at the Door,
But turning, courteous, made a farewell brief
To those that sat around. From Care and Grief
She parted first : "Companions sworn and true
Have ye been ever to me, but for Friends
I knew ye not till later, and did miss
Much solace through that error ; let this kiss,
Late known and prized, be taken for amends.
Thou, too, kind, constant Patience, with thy slow,
Sweet counsels aiding me, I did not know
That ye were angels, until ye displayed
Your wings for flight ; now bless me !" but
they said,
"We blest thee long ago."
Then turning unto twain

That stood together, tenderly and oft
She kissed them on their foreheads, whispering
soft :

“Now must we part ; yet leave me not before
Ye see me enter safe within the Door ;
Kind bosom-comforters, that by my side
The darkest hour found ever closest bide,
A dark hour waits me, ere for evermore
Night with its heaviness be overpast ;
Stay with me till I cross the Threshold o'er.”
So Faith and Hope stayed by her till the last.

But giving both her hands
To one that stood the nearest : “Thou and I
May pass together ; for the holy bands
God knits on earth are never loosed on high.
Long have I walked with Thee ; thy name arose
E'en in my sleep, and sweeter than the close
Of music was thy voice ; for thou wert sent
To lead me homewards from my banishment
By devious ways, and never hath my heart
Swerved from Thee, though our hands were
 wrung apart

By spirits sworn to sever us ; above
Soon shall I look upon Thee as Thou art.”
So she cross'd o'er with Love.



A COMPARISON

THERE is no Winter in the soul of Man ;
Its clime is Tropical, a giant tree
In stately Southern forests blowing free
And broad, it stands where equal Summer
 sways

All seasons, and as one swift joy decays,
Another pushes forth a fan-like frond
Or succulent leaf dark-shining far beyond
Before it falls ; and wing-like thoughts have
 sown

Their seeds all round about its roots, and thrown
A veil of living blooms from bough to bough,
Leaf, flower, and tendril twining, so that now
Most vain it were to track each home, or guess
Whence springs this weight and wealth of love-
 liness ;

While e'en its cloven bark, a sheath and shroud
Of splendour, blossoms o'er,—so fancies crowd
Within the soul, so mounting swift and high
Up to that tree's tall summit, suddenly

Spring in one night efflorescent, bright hopes,
That drop again to earth like flowery ropes
Let down from Heaven by angels' hands ; yet
there
Stand forth, 'mid all that fulness, gaunt and
bare
Like matted cordage, withered coils that fruit,
Or flower, or leaf, bear never, for the root
From whence they drew earth's kindly juice is
gone ;
And these are hopes that die, yet still cling on !



THE ETERNAL NOW

“For one day with thee is as a thousand years, and
a thousand years as one day.”

“**N**OW have I won a marvel and a Truth ;”
So spake the soul and trembled, “dread
and ruth

Together mixed, a sweet and bitter core
Closed in one rind ; for I did sin of yore,
But this (so said I oft) was long ago ;
So put it from me far away, but, lo !
With Thee is neither After nor Before,
O Lord, and clear within the noon-light set
Of one illimitable Present, yet
Thou lookest on my fault as it were now.
So will I mourn and humble me ; yet Thou
Art not as man that oft forgives a wrong
Because he half forgets it, Time being strong
To wear the crimson of guilt’s stain away ;
For Thou, forgiving, dost so in the Day
That shows it clearest, in the boundless Sea
Of Mercy and Atonement, utterly

Casting our pardoned trespasses behind,
No more remembered, or to come in mind ;
Set wide from us as East from West away :
So now this bitter turns to solace kind ;
And I will comfort me that once of old
A deadly sorrow struck me, and its cold
Runs through me still ; but this was long ago.
My grief is dull through age, and friends out-
worn,
And wearied comforters have long forborne
To sit and weep beside me : Lord, yet Thou
Dost look upon my pang as it were now ! ”



CONSOLATION

“They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace ; when there is no peace. . . . Is there no balm in Gilead ? is there no physician *there* ?”—JER. viii. 11, 22.

YEA ! trouble springs not from the ground,
yet must it ever be,
Man knows that he is born to care, so seeks
his remedy ;
And he hath found out store of charms and
spells to give it rest,
Yet grief turns from human comforters, the
Highest is the best !

One saith, “ Be comforted, for grief is idle and
is vain,
It never hath brought back the smile to Joy’s
dead face again,
It only fixes there the look it wore when Hope
took leave ;
Yes, grief *is* vain, I know it well, and *therefore*
will I grieve.”

One saith, "Be comforted, for thus how many
say with dawn,

'Would God that it were eve!' at eve, 'Would
God that it were morn!'"

But then more noble in its woe spake out the
grieving heart,

"Nay! rather would I all were blest and bear
alone my smart."

"And yet," saith one, "be comforted, for griev-
ing is a sin,

Thy tears may stain Heaven's goodly floors yet
there be trodden in ;

This is a grief that Heaven hath sent, a grief
that thou must bear,"—

And Patience smiled so cold, so cold, I took
her for Despair !

Yet these were simple reasoners ; I said, "I
will arise,

I will seek out counsel from the sage and wisdom
from the wise ;

They shall show me of their merchandise who
trade for hidden things,

Who go down to the heart's great deep to track
its secret springs.

Then with calm brow, one answered me in
 measured tones and brief,
 That we are stronger through our pain, and
 nobler for our grief,
 And when I looked on him, I saw he spoke
 what he believed,
 And I talked no more of grief to him who ne'er
 himself had grieved,

Or he had known that spoke of Will, how vain
 its strong control
 When Deep is calling unto Deep within the
 wave-tost soul ;
 Yea ! happy are they that endure ! yet never
 was the tide
 Of nature's agony stemmed back by high, o'er-
 mastering Pride ;

But then with kindlier mien, one said, "Go
 forth unto the fields,
 For there, and in the woods, are balms that
 nature freely yields ;
 Let Nature take thee to her heart ! she hath a
 bounteous breast
 That yearns o'er all her sorrowing sons, and
 She will give thee rest."

But Nature on the spirit-sick as on the spirit-free
Smiled, like a fair unloving face too bright for
sympathy ;
Sweet, ever sweet, are whispering leaves, are
waters in their flow,
But never on them breathed a tone to comfort
human woe !

Small solace for the deer that hath the arrow
in its side,—
And only seeks the woods to die,—that o'er his
dappled hide
Spread purple blooms of bedded heath, and
ferny branchings tall—
A deadly hurt must have strong cure, or it hath
none at all ;

And the old warfare from within that had gone
on so long,
The wasting of the inner strife, the sting of
outward wrong,
Went with me o'er the breezy hill, went with
me up the glade—
I found not God among the trees, and yet I
was afraid !

I mused, and fire that smouldered long within
 my breast brake free,
 I said, "O God, Thy works are good, and yet
 they are not THEE ;
 Still greater to the sense is that which breathes
 through every part,
 Still sweeter to the heart than all is He who
 made the heart !

I will seek Thee, not Thine, O Lord ! for (now
 I mind me) still
 Thou sendest us for soothing not to fountain,
 nor to hill ;
 Yet is there comfort in the fields if we walk in
 them with Thee,
 Who saidest, "Come, ye burdened ones, ye
 weary, unto ME."

Yet is there comfort, not in Pride that spends
 its strength in vain,
 But in casting all our care on Thee—on Thee
 who wilt sustain ;
 Not in dull Patience, saying, "This I bear, for
 it must be,"
 But in knowing that howe'er Grief comes, it
 comes to us from Thee !

Thou, Lord ! who teachest how to pray, O teach
us *how* to grieve !
For Thou hast learned the task we find so hard,
yet may not leave ;
For Thou hast grown acquaint with Grief—
Thou knowest what we feel,
Thou smitest and Thou bindest up, we look to
THEE to heal !



PENCIL-MARKS IN A BOOK OF
DEVOTION

“It happened one day, about noon, I was exceedingly surprised with the print of a man’s naked foot on the shore, which was very plain to be seen in the sand.”

STRONG words are these, “O Lord ! I seek
but Thee

Not Thine ! I ask not comfort, ask not rest ;
Give what, and how, and *when* thou wilt to me,
I bless Thee—take all back—and be Thou
blest.”

Sweet words are these, “O Lord ! it is Thy love
And not thy gifts I seek ; yet am as one
That loveth so I prize the least above
All other worth or sweetness under sun.”

And all these lines are underscored, and here
And there a tear hath been and left its stain,
The only record, haply, of a tear
Long wiped from eyes no more to weep again ;

And as I gaze, a solemn joy comes o'er me—
By these deep footprints I can surely guess
Some pilgrim by the road that lies before me
Hath crossed, long time ago, the wilderness.

With feet oft bruised among its sharp flints, duly
He turned aside to gather simples here,
And lay up cordials for his faintness—truly
Now will I track his steps and be of cheer.

And wearied, by this wayside fountain's brink
He sat to rest, and as it then befell,
The stone was rolled away, he stooped to drink
The waters springing up from life's clear well.

And oft upon his journey faring sadly
He communed with this Teacher from on high,
And meeting words of promise, meekly, gladly,
Went on his way rejoicing—so will I!



Faint, yet Pursuing 19

“FAINT, YET PURSUING”

A SONG OF THE CHURCH MILITANT

ALL day among the corn-fields of the plain,
Reaping a mighty harvest to the Lord,
Our hands have bound the sheaves ; we come
again,—
Shout for the garner stored !

All day among the vineyards of the field,
Our feet have trodden out the red ripe vine :
Sing ! sing for hearts that have not spared to
yield
A yet more purple wine !

All day against the spoilers of our land,
Our arms made bare the keen and glittering
sword ;
None turned back, none stayed the lifted hand,—
Sing ! sing unto the Lord !

All day beset by spies, begirt with foes
Building a house of holiness ; by night
We watched beside our weapons ; slow it
rose,—
Sing ! sing from Zion's height !



D

20 A Vision of Green Leaves

A VISION OF GREEN LEAVES

THE time was Winter, Winter or the Spring
That comes with tardy footstep, lingering
Like some reluctant Giver, yielding cold
The boons that it no longer may withhold ;
And ere I slept, I listened to the rain
Dashed by the fitful wind against the pane,
The wind, that even through my sleep did seem
To break upon the music of my dream,
With pause of change and dreariness, and still
Swelled, sighed, and moaned each varying scene
to fill
With trouble and unrest ; at length outworn
I slept within my sleep, and to the Morn
(Still in my dream) awoke, with vacant eye
Forth from the casement gazing listlessly,
When sudden I exclaimed, " A miracle !
A Summer come at once, without a Spring
To herald it ! a bright awakening
To life and loveliness," for all around
Were leaves, green bursting leaves, and on the
ground

A Vision of Green Leaves 21

Was short grass springing thick, and through
the wave

The dark flag cut its swift way like a glaive ;
And broad as Orient growths, upon the pool,
Large, juicy leaves lay mantling, smooth and
cool :

I saw no flowers, no fruit, but everywhere
Leaves, only leaves, that filled the summer air
With murmurs, soft as whispers, that the
heart,

Hath longed and listened for ; while light and
low,

As chidings fall from lips that turn their flow
To gentleness, quick rustlings waved apart
The boughs, and fragrance soothed the sense
like thought

Too sweet for utterance ; e'en then I caught
The Dream's full import : "'Tis the Spring's
warm sigh,"

Methought, " that calls forth all this luxury
Of leaf and greenness ; thus, upon the heart
A word, a look will bid a Summer start,
A Summer come at once, without a Spring
To herald it, a sudden waking ; "

Then from the bands of sleep my spirit broke,
And with the sweetness on my soul I woke,

22 A Vision of Green Leaves

And it was Winter still ! but in my heart
Was Summer ! Summer that would not depart,
But breathed across its silence, low and light,
Like those sweet forest-rustlings of the night ;
It was a dream of Hope ! and sent by Her
My Lady bright, because I minister
Unto her honour, while I strive to sing
And praise her with my Lyre's most silver
string ;

It was a dream of Hope ; I know the hue
Of her fresh mantle, and her symbol true,
The leaf ! she cannot give the flower or fruit,
But sends their promise by a herald mute ;
The leaf, that comes like one in haste to bring
The first of all some gladsome welcoming,
And cannot speak for joy, but with the hand
Still points and beckons to the coming band ;
I know the symbol, and I bind the sign
Upon my heart to make it doubly thine,
Thou Bringer of sweet dreams by day and night,
Still will I sing and praise thee, Lady bright !
And I will gather of these leaves, to twine
A chaplet for those sunny brows of thine ;
And by thy smiling thou wilt keep its sheen,
In Winter as in Summer fresh and green !



TO A YOUNG GIRL

TWELVE years before thee through life I
 must run,
 Dearest! oh, would I might counsel the
 hours,
 Saying, "Keep back your best sunshine for one
 That is coming behind me, and spare her the
 showers!"

Fain would I stop to remove from thy way
 Stones that have bruised me, and thorns that
 have grieved;
 Set up my errors for waymarks, to say—
Here I was wounded, ensnared, or deceived!

Vain is my wishing! in lines of our own
 We must traverse the pathway marked out
 from above;
 Life is a sorrowful teacher, alone
 We must learn its deep lessons—unaided by
 Love.

Yet where I journey waste places among,
I will scatter a seed by the wayside, and say,
Soft to myself as I hasten along—

“It may be a flower when *she* cometh this
way;”

Yet will I leave thee some token, that there,
Just where the path looks most rugged and
dim,
It haply may cheer thee in meeting with Care,
To know that thy friend walked before thee
with Him !

So for thy loving and trusting and truth,
Gentle acquittance in part it may be ;
Thou who hast shrined me an image of Youth,
Brighter than ever my youth was to me !

February 13th.



THE SOUL'S WOOERS

LIKE Captive Judah, underneath the Tree
She sat alone and silent on the ground ;
While from the valley rising, came the sound
Of music and of dancing, gay and free,—
But none did bid her to that company ;
Till lifting up her heavy lids, she found
One standing by her, winged, and rosy
crowned
And robed within the purple : “ Rise, for thee
(He said, and kissed her on the brow elate)
The Ruler of the Feast hath kept till now
The richest wine ; ” but as she marvelled, drew
Another near, that whispered to her, “ Wait ;
Not of this vintage shalt thou taste till thou
Shalt drink it with me in my Kingdom *new*.”



SILENCE

I TURN unto the Past
When I have need of comfort ; I am vowed
To dear remembrances : most like some proud,
Poor Noble, who, on evil fortunes cast,
Has saved his pictures from the wreck, I muse
Mid these that I have gathered, till I lose
The dreariness of the Present !

On the hill
That noon in summer found us ; far below
We heard the river in a slumbrous flow
Chide o'er its pebbles, slow and yet more slow ;
Beneath our feet the very grasses slept,
Signed by the sliding sunbeam as it crept
From blade to blade, slow-stealing with a still
Admonitory gesture ; now a thrill
Ran lightly through the wood, but ere to sound
The shiver grew upon the hush profound,
It died encalmed ; methought a Spirit's sigh
Had then been audible, but none came by
To trouble us, and we were silent, fed
With golden musings by our friend that read

From out thy chosen Poet ; in a hall
 Of mute expectancy we stood, where all
 That listened with us held their breath unstirred ;
 When suddenly the reader's voice let fall
 Its flow of music ; sweet as was the song
 He paused in, conquered by a spell more strong,
 We asked him not its cadence to recall.
 It seemed as if a Thought of God did fill
 His World, that drawn unto the Father's breast,
 Lay hush'd with all its children. This was Rest,
 And this the soul's true Sabbath, deep and still.
 Then marvelled I no longer that a space
 Is found in Heaven for Silence ; so to me
 That hour made known its true sufficiency,
 Revealed not oft below, because its place
 Is with the Blessed ! Speech is but a part
 Of Life's deep poverty, whereof the heart
 Is conscious, striving in its vague unrest
 To fill its void ; but when the measure pressed
 And running over to its clasp is given,
 It seeketh nothing more, and Earth is blest
 With Silence—even such as is in Heaven !



MEETING

OH, how elate my look,—
Far down the thronged and lighted table
sent

Upon a careless quest indifferent,—

Met thine in mirthful flashing! Then we took
Our leave together, and, like boys released
By the glad stroke of Noonday, from the feast
Went home beneath the star-light. Oh, that
night,

How shall I e'er forget it! At a bound
My spirit rose, a river that had found
Its level on a sudden; forth in chase
Quick vagrant fancies rushed as in a race,
Unemulous and glad; while at the light
Of those wild torch-fires solemn thoughts and
deep

Enkindled clear, as on a northern sky,
Through Borealis gleams that flash and leap,
The stars look down. What was that hour to
me!

What is it now! My soul hath been more free,

More noble, since that meeting ; to the laws
Of this strange country for awhile in pause
Content to hold my breath ; with step more bold
Because my wings have grown, I walk these old
Accustomed pathways.

Earnest Friend, thy youth
Of soul makes all things fresher ; in thy truth
Grows all more true, more real ; come and hold
Thy mirror to my soul, that I may be
The more myself for having been with thee !



PARTING

TO E. L. R.

WE parted not like lovers in their youth,
Fond pledge and promise eager to
renew,

But e'en like steadfast-hearted friends whose
truth,

Tried by world-wear, world-change, soul-
conflict, knew

Its strength and rested ; so our words were
few.

We parted with the clamour of the street
Around us thick, yet secret, lone, and sweet
Was our communing. Then I did not say

As oft of yore, "Dear friend, when far away,

Remember me," nor thou, "Forget me not."

What is this life that *Thou* shouldst be forgot
For all that it hath yet to give me? Nay!

In this world or the next I count to be

Rememb'ring and remembered ; we have
shared

The cloud and sunshine here, Eternity

Will never blight the flower that Time hath
spared !



WINTER

COLD, cold ! it is very cold
 Without the house ; the year is old !
 His pulse is faint, and his blood runs slow,
 He lies, like a corpse, in his shroud of snow ;
 It was drawn round his limbs by a noiseless
 sprite ;
 He grew white with age in a single night.
 Wrap him up close, and cover him deep ;
 Nothing is left for him now but to sleep !
 Sleep away ! dream away ! take no care,
 All day falls the snow through the darkened
 air ;
 Fast, fast ! for it knows, firm packed together,
 The clouds have laid stores in for wintry
 weather ;
 Dark, dark ! like a lazy slave, the sun
 Leaves his short half day's work all undone ;
 But the night is clear, and the stars shine forth,
 And the fire-flags stream in the frosty north,
 And the glistening earth in the moon's pale ray,
 Looks fair with the smile of a softer day :

Red breaks the morn, and the evening glows
With the sea-shell's blush on the drifted
snows,

Rose-tinted pearl! while 'mid the glooms
The flake - feathered - trees show like giant
plumes.

No stir awakes in the death-like woods,
In those still enchanted solitudes,
Wreathed in all wild fantastic forms
Are the tomb-like halls of the King of Storms,
The streams are all chained, and their prisoned
waves

Sleep a charmed sleep within crystal caves ;
No stir in the waters, no sound on the air,—
Their inmates find shelter, they only know
where ;

But cold is the comfort they own at the best,
When the icicle hangs where the swallow found
rest,

And a few of Earth's wise things when summer
was gay,

Laid by something safe for a Winterly day ;
But the wisest among them have taken a
sleep,

Snug coiled up, and warm, while the snow lies
so deep,

Where the keen frost may bite, yet can do them
 no harm,
 As they dream of the summer and all that is
 warm :
 No breath in the valley, no breeze on the
 hill,
 No stir in the farm, all is dull, all is chill ;
 And the cattle lie huddled within the fold,—
 Cold, cold ! it is very cold.

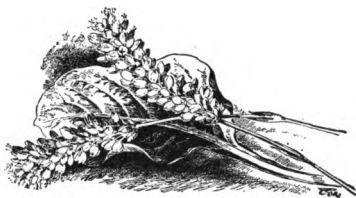
Warm, warm ! it is so warm
 Within the Heart, that all is warm !
 The Heart knows a secret to keep out the
 chill,
 Let it come when it likes, and stay as it will,
 For, the keener it blows, and the deeper it
 snows,
 The higher the pure flame of charity glows !
 When earth grows unkind to her children, nor
 cares
 How soon they may sink to that cold breast of
 hers ;
 Though SHE know not pity, love will not with-
 hold ;
 There are those who have hunger to bear with
 the cold ;

There are homes that are no homes! no work
and no wage,
No sunshine for childhood, no comfort for age,
No food and no fire; but sickness, with care
And poverty, dreary companions! are there.

Oh! sweet to sit around the board
That Providence hath blessed,—
And sweet to draw the curtain round our warm
and sheltered rest;
To see the faces at whose smile the household
hearth grows bright,
And to feel that, 'mid the darkness, in *our*
dwellings there is light!
If we have done what love might do, and wished
that it were more,
To keep the grim wolf yet awhile without the
poor man's door;
And if our day hath not gone down, without its
kind relief
To some of those its sad dawn woke to misery
and grief,
We need not fear the frost and cold; we have
found out a charm,
To keep our House, and Home, and Heart, and
all our Being warm!

Kind Christmas comes with all its gifts, and
 absent friends seem near,
 And the Christian hails earth's darkest day for
 the brightest in his year ;
 And there is peace, and there is joy, and there
 are anthems sung,
 As once by angels in the air, when Christmas-
 time was young ;—
 And our hearts learn the tones of that happy
 psalm.

Warm, warm ! it is very warm !



A SONG OF FAREWELL

DEATH

“Leaves and clustered fruits, and flowers eterne,
ETERNAL TO THE WORLD, BUT NOT TO ME.”—HOOD.

THE Spring will come again, dear friends,
The Swallow o’er the Sea ;
The bud will hang upon the bough,
The blossom on the tree ;
And many a pleasant sound will rise to greet
her on her way,
The voice of bird, and leaf, and stream, and
warm winds in their play ;
Oh ! sweet the airs that round her breathe ! and
bountiful is she,
She bringeth all the things that fresh, and sweet,
and hopeful be ;
She scatters promise on the Earth with open
hand and free,
But not for me, my friends,
But not for me !

Summer will come again, dear friends,
Low murmurs of the Bee
Will rise through the long sunny day
Above the flowery lea ;
The deep and dreamy woods will own the
 slumbrous spell she weaves,
And send a greeting, mixed with sighs, through
 all their quivering leaves.
Oh, precious are her glowing gifts! and plenteous
 is she,
She bringeth all the lovely things that bright
 and fragrant be ;
She scatters fulness on the Earth with lavish
 hand and free,
But not for me, my friends,
But not for me !

Autumn will come again, dear friends,
His spirit-touch will be
With gold upon the harvest-field,
With crimson on the tree ;
He passeth o'er the silent woods, they wither at
 his breath,
Slow fading in a still decay, a change that is
 not Death.
Oh ! rich, and liberal, and wise, and provident is he !

38 A Song of Farewell

He taketh to his Garner-house the things that
 ripened be ;
He gathereth his store from Earth, all silently—
And he will gather me, my friends,
He will gather me !



REST

THIS life hath hours that hold
The soul above itself, as at a show
A child, upon a loving arm and bold
Uplifted safe, upon the crowd below
Smiles down serene,—I speak to them that
know
This thing whereof I speak, that none can guess
That none can paint,—what marks hath Blessed-
ness,
What characters whereby it may be told?
Such hours with things that never can grow old
Are shrined. One eve, 'mid autumns far away,
I walked along beside a river; grey
And pale was earth, the heavens were grey and
pale,
As if the dying year and dying day
Sobbed out their lives together, wreaths of mist
Stole down the hills to shroud them while they
kissed
Each other sadly; yet behind this veil

Of dreariness and decay my soul did build,
To music of its own, a temple filled
With worshippers beloved that hither drew
In silence ; then I thirsted not to hear
The voice of any friend, nor wished for dear
Companion's hand firm clasped in mine ; I knew,
Had such been with me, they had been less
near.



OLD LETTERS—VI

(Extract)

SO doth life, our field
Redeemed for us, but slowly, slowly yield
The treasure hid within it! all our loss
Would grow to more, and this our Earth to
Heaven,
Might we but pierce unto the blessedness
That lies so near us, might we but possess
The things that are our own, as they were
given!



IN SADNESS

A CHILD in sickness left behind its mates
Upon a summer holiday, from tears
Refrains himself a little while, and waits
Perchance in hope to see some comrade kind
Come back to play with him ; but no, he
hears
Their voices die away, and up the hill
Now, thinks he, they are climbing, now they
wind
Along the hedgerow path, and now they find
The berries that o'erhang it ; even now
The red ripe nuts from off the hazel bough
Are dropping fast, and then across the brook
He hears them shouting to each other, through
The alder-bushes. So his thoughts pursue
Those wanderers on their way, until his look
Steals wistful to the sunshine, and his book
Drops from his hand ; what would he with that
glad
Free company ? too weary for their glee,

Too weak to join their sports—yet he is sad ;

Then comes his mother, lifting tenderly
Her darling on her knee, and all his day
Glides peaceful on, though none come back to
play.

The house is very still ; none come between
Their quiet talk, she smiles on him serene,
He speaketh oft to her of those away :
So, Father, I am left ! I will not mourn
To follow after them, so I may be
The closer to Thy heart ;—so I am drawn
Through stillness and through sadness nearer
Thee.



To —

TO —

(*Extract*)

SUDDENLY there fell
A glory from the Heavens, and all the
dell

Was filled with quivering light, as in a cup
Its woody hollow caught and kindled up
The sun's last sinking flashes ; on the sky
There was no cloud, no flaming bar, no line
Of fire along the West, but solemnly
Heaven glowed into its depths, as if the curse
Were lifted upwards from our universe
One moment's Sabbath space, and only Love
Stooped down above its world. So from
above

A smile dropt visibly on Earth, that prest
To meet that sign of reconciliation blest
On brow and bosom blest.



PAX IN NOVISSIMO

“He gave her therewith a sure token that he was a true messenger, and was come to bid her make haste to be gone. The token was an arrow, sharpened with love, let easily into her heart ; so Christiana knew that her time was come.”

NOT like the rulers of our vanities
At earthly feasts art Thou, O Love
Divine ;

These pour their best at first, and still decline
At each full-flowing draught, till only lees
Of bitterness remain, but Thou dost please
To keep unto the last Thy richest wine.

And now this grace-cup, crowned with flowers,
o'erflows

To meet my lips, the music never fell
More sweet, yet from the banquet, ere its close,
I rise to bid the company farewell ;
I see no sign, I hear no warning bell,
No airy tongue my Summoner hath been,
Yet all my soul by cords invisible
Is drawn the surer unto One unseen ;

For oh, my Father ! whom I have desired
By night, and sought for early, not through
Man
Or Angel have I at Thy voice inquired
Since first my solemn quest for Thee began ;
Thee, only Thee my spirit hath required
For Teacher and for Counsellor and Friend ;
So now Thou needest me, Thou dost not send
By any other, but within the shade
Thy awful Presence makes, ere yet the fall
Of evening darkens, I can hear Thee call,
“Come home, my child !” and I am not
afraid ;
Though oft Thou showedst me a brow austere,
And oft Thy lessons, hard to understand,
Were grievous to me, now Thou drawest near,
I see Thy smile, I do not feel Thy hand.

And He, our Brother kind,
Wounded and grieved by us, yet waiting where
He passed before our mansions to prepare,
Made Himself strange at first ; I did not find
An instant welcome ; oft with speech severe
He questioned me, and oft methought His ear
Was turned away, but now I feel His tear
Upon my cheek, His kiss upon my soul ;

He biddeth all withdraw, while with His Own
He talketh: "How is this, Thou hast not known
Thy Brother? I am Joseph,"—now no more

Doth Love refrain itself because its goal
Is well-nigh won, and all its trial sore
O'erpast, it leaveth with a brow serene
The secret Chamber where so oft unseen
It wept before;

For ofttimes Love must grieve;
For us content and willing to be sad,
It left the halls wherein they made it glad,
And came to us that grieved it; oft below
It hides its face because it will not show
The stain upon it. Now I feel its clear
Full shining eyes upon me, and I know
Soon I shall meet the kiss without the tear!

For all my life grows sweet,
I know not how to name it; from behind
Comes up a murmur voluble and fleet
Of mingling voices, some were harsh, some
kind,
But all are tuned to gentleness, the wind
That bears them onwards hath so soft a wing,
As if it were a Dove unused to bring

Aught but a loving message ; so Earth sends
One only question on it from the track
Where I have passed, "Friends, friends? we
part as friends?"

And all my soul takes up and sendeth back
One word for echo and for answer, "Friends."

And, oh, how fair this Earth
I leave!—methinks of old I never took
Account of half its loveliness and worth ;
Yea, oft I mourned because I could not look
More deep within the pages of this Book,
God's glorious Book shut in between the eves
And glowing morns, I read betwixt the leaves
Like one that passes hastily, and failed
To catch its import ; yet hath One prevailed
To loose its golden clasps, and on her knee
He biddeth Nature lift me tenderly,
And read thereout her Fairy tales, and tell
Where lie her treasures guarded with a spell.
She takes me to her heart, she will not hold
A secret from me now ! things new and old
She brings to please me. Yet, as if she knew—
A loving nurse—that soon her child must
sleep,
And waken in a land where all things keep

Their first simplicity, she doth renew
Her forms that charmed me earliest ;

With the dew
Still hanging round them, well I know these
flowers

She holds before me ; through the noontide
hours

I looked not on their hues ; they did not
burst

To gorgeous life, like some that I have nursed,
Shut from the ruder air, until they caught
Through each broad leaf a colouring of thought,
And spake a symbol-language too intense,

The while each lamp-lit urn

Did glow and spread and burn

Its heart away in odours, till the sense
Waxed faint through fragrance ; not like these
of bold

Magnificence, nor dearer flowers that grew
Familiar by my path, with whom of old

I talked so secretly, it seemed we drew
A common breath, until methought they took

A human aspect, and like friends that know
Too much the heart's deep history, their look
Hath ofttimes troubled me ;

But these did blow
For me in meadows wide, ere yet I knew
That flowers were charactered with joy or
grief;
Ye hid no secret in your folded leaf,—
Flowers innocent and cool
That hung above the pool,
Or thrid with gold the pleasant pastures
through;
I learned no “Ai, Ai,” in your school,
Quaint orchis, speedwells blue,
And slender cups that grew
Deep in the woods, pale purple-veined and
brimming o’er with dew.

I see the quiet glade
Slope sunward, shut among its hills that lie
With light upon their brows; I hear the cry
Of wheeling rooks, the little brook goes by
And lifts a hurrying voice as one afraid
To linger on its way; within the shade
Moss-cushioned now I sit, where once my day
Cast all its wealth of Summer hours away
Upon a book of Marvels; sunbeams hid
Among the boughs came trickling down, and
slid

From page to page to light me on my way ;
 The charm that fled, the glory that forsook
 Flow back upon my spirit ; I am glad
 Of ye, sweet scenes, sweet thoughts ! I know
 the look

Ye turn upon me, it hath nothing sad ;
 Long, long ago, yet not through blame of mine,
 I left you far behind me on my track,
 Now flits the shadow on Life's Dial back,
 Twice ten degrees to find you ; things Divine
 Are imaged by the earthly, it was meet
 That I should gather in my soul these sweet,
 Long-parted, childish fancies, ere I go
 Where none but children enter ;

Even so ;

I sleep at noon ; all household noises cease,
 No voices call me from without ; the room
 Is hushed and darkened round me ; through the
 gloom
 One friend beloved keeps moving to and fro
 With step so quiet, oft I only know
 Her presence by her gentle breathing,—
 Peace !



F

52 The Shepherd's Sabbath Song

THE SHEPHERD'S SABBATH SONG

(Translated from the German of Uhland)

THIS is the Lord's bright Day!
I am alone upon the plains. No
sound
Of morning-bells awakens round
With music on my way;
Yet kneeling here, I pray,
O Lord, in silent awe! I feel
That many also pray and kneel
Unseen, beside me here.
The listening heavens are clear
As if, through solemn depths of blue
Their doors were opening on my view,—
This is the Lord's bright Day.



II

Poems published in 1867





HOME

TWO birds within one nest ;
Two hearts within one breast ;
Two spirits in one fair
Firm league of love and prayer,
Together bound for aye, together blest.

An ear that waits to catch
A hand upon the latch ;
A step that hastens its sweet rest to win,
A world of care without,
A world of strife shut out,
A world of love shut in.



IMITATED FROM THE TROUBADOUR
SORDEL

HER words, methinks, were cold and few ;
We parted coldly ; yet,
Quick-turning after that adieu,
How kind a glance I met !
A look that was not meant for me,
Yet sweeter for surprise,
As if her soul took leave to be
One moment in her eyes :
Now tell me, tell me, gentle friends,
Oh, which shall I believe,
Her eyes, her eyes that bid me hope,
Her words that bid me grieve ?

Her words, methinks, were few and cold :
What matter ! Now I trust,
Kind eyes, unto your tale half-told,
Ye speak because ye must !
Too oft will heavy laws constrain
The lips, compelled to bear

A message false ; too often fain
 To speak but what they dare ;
 Full oft will words, will smiles betray,
 But tears are always true ;
 Looks ever mean the thing they say—
 Kind eyes, I trust to you !

Her looks were kind—oh, gentle eyes,
 Love trusts you. Still he sends
 By you his questions, his replies,
 He knows you for his friends.
 Oh, gentle, gentle eyes, by Love
 So trusted, and so true
 To Love, ye could not if ye would
 Deceive, I trust to you !



THE SINGER

(From a Provençal Poem of the Ninth Century)

HOW thick the grasses spring
In May ! how sweetly ring
The woods with song of many birds ! the note

That is of all most sweet,
Most varied, most complete,
Comes from a little bird of slender throat,

The Nightingale, that sings
Through all the night, and flings
Upon the wood's dark breast her sweet lament.

What ! little bird, dost seek
To conquer with thy beak
The lyre's full ringing chords ? be well content :

A Minstrel to thy song
Long listened, lingering long ;
A Prince a moment paused upon his way—

"Sweet, sweet!" they said, and then
Passed onwards, while again
Broke from the topmost bough thy thrilling lay.

What! thinkest thou to chain
The world? thou dost not strain
Thy slender throat, forgetful of its need.

Thou carest but to sing—
Yet who is found to bring,
To stay thy want, a berry or a seed?

They praise thy song, and yet
They pass thee, and forget;
None feedeth thee save He who gave thy strain

Oh! why wilt thou prolong
Thy sweet, thy mournful song,
Unwearied, while the world to sleep is fain?

When Summer comes, unstirred
Are all the leaves, the bird
Is silent, while her callow young are tended.

When Winter comes, the leaves
Fall off, and no one grieves;
The singer dies, her little song is ended!



TO L. A. C

OH, hast thou won my heart, my love?
What gain to thee? what gain?
It plights thee with no golden ring,
It decks thee with no chain;
A simple thing, yet it will bring
To thee, my love, no pain;
To give thee rest, to make thee blest
It hath been ever fain, my love,
It hath been ever fain.

Oh, have I won thy heart, my love?
What gain to me! what gain!
What brooding calm, what soothing balm,
What sweet release from pain!
Through sudden rest my spirit guessed
What hour to me it came,
And day by day I mark its stay
Through comfort of the same, my love,
Through comfort of the same.



Pleasant to Remember Thee 61

IF IT BE PLEASANT TO REMEMBER THEE

IF it be pleasant to remember thee,
What is it, then, what is it to forget thee,
But for a space, one moment's space to be
As though I ne'er had loved, or known, or
met thee?
My soaring soul on some high quest to send,
On some stern task to bind my strength's
endeavour,
Then, like the bird, with rapid wing descend
Upon the nest that is my own for ever.

By some sweet song, by some dear dream to be
Upon my lonely way entranced, o'ertaken;
Awhile, awhile to cease to think of thee,
Then in the sweetness of thy soul to waken!
Sweet dream, with day pass not away,
As once in hours when all my joys were
fleeter;
Dear haunting lay, I bid thee stay,
And in my heart for ever more grow sweeter.

62 Pleasant to Remember Thee

If still to bear thee in my mind be sweet,
What is it then, what is it then to lose thee?
In play with life to let the moments cheat
My steadfast heart that flies again to choose
thee ?
Afar, I see thee lift thy soul in prayer,
I see thee in thy quiet ways abiding ;
Oh, sweet to me hath grown the common air,
To me, for whom the Rose of life is hiding !



A SONG

KISS me before I sleep,
Oh gentle child, oh loving child ! that
so

My spirit, ere it sinks within the wide
Dim world of shrouded dreams, unsatisfied,
And seeking ever, unto thine may grow,
Nor stir, nor move, nor wander to and fro ;
Kiss me before I sleep !

Kiss me before I wake,
Oh loving child, oh child beloved, that so
The sweetness of thy soul, thy smile, thine
eyes,
May meet my spirit on its way to take
The chill from off this life of ours, and make
A world more kind and warm wherein to
rise ;
Kiss me before I wake.”



64 Amid Change, Unchanging

AMID CHANGE, UNCHANGING

THE Poet singeth like the bird that sitteth
by the rose,
While dewes are chill, and on the hill the first
faint sunbeam glows ;
While through the buds' thick-folded green
the first red rose-streak shows,
Sing, Poet, sing of Hope and Spring,
Still sing beside thy rose !

The Poet singeth like the bird that sitteth by
the rose,
While on the golden summer noon her golden
heart o'eflows ;
And now she waxeth red, now pale, yet ever
is the rose,
Sing, Poet, sooth of love and youth,
Still sing beside thy rose !

Amid Change, Unchanging 65

The Poet singeth like the bird that sitteth by
the rose,
When from the drooping stalk her brief sweet
glory earthward goes,
And the red is kindling on the leaf that fadeth
from the rose,
Sing, Poet, sing, remembering,
Still sing beside thy rose !



THE BRIDGE

NOON

WE lingered on the rustic bridge,
We saw the pebbles in the stream
Below us, clear in amber light
Of noonday, flash and gleam ;
Afar, the yellow flag-flowers caught
A glory from the flitting beam,
And all was still and fair, methought,
And golden as a dream.

Oh, might this hour not pass away !
Oh, were it given to us, not lent !
And might we, framed within it, stay,
A breathing picture of content !
And hear the babbling waters run,
And hear the distant stock-dove coo,
And dream that in the world were none
But only I and you.



THE SUMMONS

METHOUGHT from out the crowd a
steadfast eye

Did single out mine own. A voice Divine
Was borne within my soul, in tones that made
Such depth of music there, the sense did fade
Through sweetness that it kindled ; Lord, for
Thine

I knew the voice full well ! and yet I heard
Of all Thou spakest then one only word ;
My Name. Thou calledst me. I must prepare
For Thee this day ! and wilt Thou come and
share

My midday meal, while I with heart elate
Shall wait on Thee, or wilt Thou rather wait
On me, Thy servant ? through this noontide
glare

Thy Banner drawing tenderly, to spread
An early dusk that I may lay my head
The sooner at Thy supper on Thy breast ?

It matters little, Lord ! or come or send—
Take Thou my spirit hence, or like a Friend
Make Thou Thy home within it,—I am blest.



A SCHERZO

A SHY PERSON'S WISHES

WITH the wasp at the innermost heart
of a peach,
On a sunny wall out of tip-toe reach,
With the trout in the darkest summer pool,
With the fern-seed clinging behind its cool
Smooth frond, in the chink of an aged tree,
In the woodbine's horn with the drunken bee,
With the mouse in its nest in a furrow old,
With the chrysalis wrapt in its gauzy fold ;
With things that are hidden, and safe, and bold,
With things that are timid, and shy, and free,
Wishing to be ;
With the nut in its shell, with the seed in its
pod,
With the corn as it sprouts in the kindly clod,
Far down where the secret of beauty shows
In the bulb of the tulip, before it blows ;
With things that are rooted, and firm, and deep,
Quiet to lie, and dreamless to sleep ;

With things that are chainless, and tameless,
and proud,
With the fire in the jagged thunder-cloud,
With the wind in its sleep, with the wind in
its waking,
With the drops that go to the rainbow's making,
Wishing to be with the light leaves shaking,
Or stones on some desolate highway breaking ;
Far up on the hills, where no foot surprises
The dew as it falls, or the dust as it rises ;
To be couched with the beast in its torrid lair,
Or drifting on ice with the polar bear,
With the weaver at work at his quiet loom ;
Anywhere, anywhere, out of this room !



70 To a Remembered Stream

TO A REMEMBERED STREAM, AND A NEVER FORGOTTEN FRIEND

SWEET stream, the haunt of solitary hern
And shy kingfisher, far from busy town
Or even populous hamlet, winding down
Through banks thick fringed with underwood
and fern

And hazel thickets, where the ripe nuts turn
Unmarked and slow to Autumn's ruddy
brown ;

Where gems thy single rock its feathery
crown

(For nought of thine looks ever sad or stern !)

With berried scarlet of the mountain ash ;

I never hear 'mid waking dreams thy dash

Above the pebbles, but I think on One

Whose course of days hath by thy waters
run,

A course like thine of calm and quietness,

Nor ever raised a voice except to bless !



Elizabeth Barrett Browning 71

TO ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING IN 1851

I LOSE myself within thy mind—from room
To goodly room thou leadest me, and
still

Dost show me of thy glory more, until
My soul like Sheba's Queen faints, overcome,
And all my spirit dies within me, numb,
Sucked in by thine, a larger star, at will ;
And hasting like thy bee, my hive to fill,
I "swoon for very joy" amid thy bloom ;
Till—not like that poor bird (as poets feign)
That tried against the Lutanist's her skill,
Crowding her thick precipitate notes, until
Her weak heart brake above the contest
vain—

Did not thy strength a nobler thought
instil,
I feel as if I ne'er could sing again !



72 Elizabeth Barrett Browning

TO ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING IN 1861

I PRAISED thee not while living; what to
thee

Was praise of mine? I mourned thee not when
dead;

I only loved thee,—love thee! oh thou fled
Fair spirit, free at last where all are free,
I only love thee, bless thee, that to me

Forever thou hast made the rose more red,
More sweet each word by olden singers said
In sadness, or by children in their glee;

Once, only once in life I heard thee speak,
Once, only once I kissed thee on the cheek,
And met thy kiss and blessing; scarce I knew
Thy smile, I only loved thee, only grew

Through wealth, through strength of thine,
less poor, less weak;
Oh what hath death with souls like thine
to do?



THE RECONCILER

(*Extracts*)

AND first with Life
 Thou madest friends for us ; our lives
 in Thine
 Grow kind and gracious, Lord, when Thou
 didst make
 Thy soul an offering for sin, Thy love
 Was even unto Death ; yea, far above,
 For Thou didst suffer Life for us ; to take
 More hard than to resign.

And since this garment old
 And fretted by the moth Thy love hath borne
 Upon Thee, all that wear it in its fold
 With Thee enwrapt and gathered, have grown
 bold,
 To Thee and to each other closer drawn ;
 Pale grows our purple pride
 Beside this vesture dyed
 In Kingly blood ; before our common name
 We feel our titles but a gorgeous shame,

That doth betray, not clothe, our nakedness ;
But Heaven and Earth have been
More near, since Earth hath seen
Its God walk Earth as Man ; since Heaven
hath shown

A Man upon its throne ;
The street and market-place
Grow holy ground ; each face
(Pale faces, marked with care,
Dark, toil-worn brows) grows fair ;
King's children are these all ; though want and
sin

Have marred their beauty glorious within,
We may not pass them but with reverent
eye ;

As when we see some goodly temple graced
To be Thy dwelling, ruined and defaced,
The haunt of sad and doleful creatures, lie
Bare to the sky, and open to the gust,
It grieveth us to see This House laid waste,
It pitieth us to see it in the dust !

The World that puts Thee by,
That opens not to greet Thee with Thy
train,
That sendeth after Thee the sullen cry,

“We will not have Thee over us to reign ;”
Itself doth testify, through searchings vain
Of Thee and of its need, and for the good
It will not, of some base similitude
Takes up a taunting witness, till its mood,
Grown fierce o’er failing hopes, doth rend and
tear

Its own illusions, grown too thin and bare
To wrap it longer ; for within the gate
Where all must pass, a veiled and hooded
Fate,

A dark Chimera, coiled and tangled lies
(And he who answers not its questions dies),
Still changing form and speech, but with the
same

Vexed riddles, Gordian - twisted, bringing
shame

Upon the nations that with eager cry
Hail each new solver of the mystery ;

Yet he, of these the best,

Bold guesser, hath but prest

Most nigh to Thee, our noisy plaudits wrong ;

True Champion, that hast wrought

Our help of old, and brought

Meat from this eater, sweetness from this
strong.

Oh, Bearer of the key
That shuts and opens with a sound so sweet
Its turning in the wards is melody,
All things we move among are incomplete
And vain until we fashion them in Thee !
We labour in the fire,
Thick smoke is round about us, through the din
Of words that darken counsel, clamours dire
Ring from thought's beaten anvil, where
within
Two Giants toil, that even from their birth
With travail-pangs have torn their mother
Earth,
And wearied out her children with their keen
Upbraidings of the other, till between
Thou camest, saying, "Wherefore do ye wrong
Each other?—ye are Brethren." Then these
twain
Will own their kindred, and in Thee retain
Their claims in peace, because Thy land is
wide
As it is goodly ; here they pasture free,
This lion and this leopard, side by side,
A little child doth lead them with a song ;
Now, Ephraim's envy ceaseth, and no more
Doth Judah anger Ephraim chiding sore,

For one did ask a Brother, one a King,
So dost Thou gather them in one, and bring,
Thou, King for evermore, for ever Priest,
Thou, Brother of our own from bonds released,
 A Law of Liberty,
 A Service making free,
A Commonweal, where each has all in Thee."



THE CLEFT

1861

“‘Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

‘Oh, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.’”

THE skies have voices soft
And loud, they mutter oft,
Dissolve and break in tears of joy and wonder ;
More fierce the shock, the din
More harsh, when from within
Earth shakes, self-torn, and riven with secret
thunder ;

And now a ghastly cleft
Yawns wide from right to left,
And sucks and draws the Western World
within it ;

What voice, what arm uplift
 This dire encroaching rift
 May close with sovereign spell? and how
 begin it?

In such a gulf of old
 The Roman flung, not gold,
 But Youth's heroic hope and Strength's en-
 deavour;
 Yet this one of the best
 Hath ta'en, and for the rest
 Still craves, unclosed, insatiate, widening ever.

Say will ye smoothe it over,
 And bid the maid and lover
 Dance here away their light-linked hours of
 leisure?
 Yea, smoothe it over, sow it
 With grass and flowers; below it
 Are sounds that mingle strangely with the
 measure.

Or, leaning o'er its edges,
 Now will ye barter pledges
 With clasping hands, and talk of hearts com-
 bining,

Or plant the rootless tree
Within it,—LIBERTY,
Hung round with garlands and with ribbons
shining ?

The jagged cleft from side
To side yawns yet more wide ;
And Echo from within, your words recalling,
Hath sent from out the ground
The yet more hollow sound
Of loosened earth upon a coffin falling.

Then let it yawn to sever
The Bond and Free for ever ;
Than Falsehood's hectic flush of vain relying,
On Freedom's cheek more fair
The glow of health, though there
Across it broad and deep a scar be lying.

Yea, let the sword pierce through
This tangle, and undo
The knot that doth but harder twist for
friction :
Oh, seek not now to bind
What God hath loosed ! no kind
Espousals these, but fettered, galled constriction.

When life meets life with kiss
 Of rapture strong, oh ! this
 Is union, this is strength ; then leave the dying
 With Death their troth to plight,
 In charnel vaults by night,
 'Mid dead men's bones and all uncleanness
 lying.

There leave them ! let the wide,
 Deep chasm still divide
 'Twixt Night and Day, 'twixt Light and Dark-
 ness ; know
 That greater than the whole
 Is now the part ; the soul
 Is nobler than the body,—let them go !



82 "The Saturday Review"

"THE SATURDAY REVIEW"

LEARN to live, and live and learn,"
In the days when I used to go to
school,
Would always pass for an excellent rule ;
But now it's grown a serious concern
The number of things I've had to unlearn
Since first I began the page to turn
Of *The Saturday Review*.
For once (I believe) I believed in truth
And love, and the hundred foolish things
One sees in one's dreams and believes in one's
youth,—
In Angels with curls, and in Angels with
wings,
In Saints, and Heroes, and Shepherds too ;
The pictures that David and Virgil drew
So sweetly, I thought were taken
From very life, but now I find
A Shepherd is but an uncouth Hind,
Songless, soulless, from time out of mind,
Who has cared for nothing but bacon.

“The Saturday Review” 83

And though to confess it may well seem strange,
When I had them by scores and dozens
(I was young, to be sure, and all things change),
I really *have* liked my cousins,
And schoolfellows too, and can bring to mind
Some uncles of mine who were truly kind,
And aunts who were far from crusty ;
And even my country neighbours too
Didn't seem by half such a tedious crew
As now I find they must be.

And I used to think it might be kind,
In the world's great marching order,
To help the poor stragglers left behind,
Halt and maimed, and broken and blind,
On their way to a distant border ;
Not to speak of the virtuous poor, I thought
There was here and there a sinner
Might be mended a little, though not of the sort
One would think of asking to dinner.
But now I find that no one believes
In Ragged Children, or Penitent Thieves,
Or Homeless Homes, but a few Old Maids
Who have tried and failed at all other trades
And who take to these things for recreation
In their aimless life's dull Long Vacation.

H

84 "The Saturday Review"

And so as we're going along with the Priest
And Levite (the roads are more dry in the
East)

We need have no hesitation,
When the mud is lying about so thick,
To scatter a little and let it stick
To the coat of the Good Samaritan, used
To be spattered, battered, blackened, and
bruised ;
These sort of people don't mind it the least—
Why, bless you, it's their vocation !

Yet sometimes I've thought it a little strange,—
When good people get such very hard change,
In return for their kindly halfpence,
When the few who are grieved for sorrows and
sins
Are bowled to the earth like wooden pins,
When to care for the heathen, or pity the
slave,
Sets a man down for fool or knave,
With *The Saturday* in its sapience,—
Things that are mean and base and low
Are checked by never a word or blow ;
The gaping crowds that go in hope
To see Blondin slip from the cruel rope

"The Saturday Review" 85

Tightened or slack, and come away
In trust of more luck another day,
Meet never a line's reproving ;
Heenan and Sayers may pound and thwack
Each other blue and yellow and black,
And only get a pat on the back
From the power that keeps all moving.

And I sometimes think, if this same Review,
And the world a little longer too
Should last, will the violets come out blue ?
Will the rose be red, and will lovers woo
In the foolish way that they used to do ?
Will doves in the summer woodlands coo,
And the nightingales mourn without asking
leave ?
Will the lark have an instinct left to cleave
The sunny air with her song and her wing ?—
Perhaps we may move to abolish spring ;
And now that we've grown so hard to please,
We may think that we're bored by the grass
and the trees ;
The moon may be proved a piece of cheese,
Or an operatic delusion.
Fathers and Mothers may have to go,
Brothers and Sisters be voted slow,

86 "The Saturday Review"

Christmas a tax that one's forced to pay,
And Heaven itself but an out-of-the-way
Old-fashioned place that has had its day,
That one wouldn't a residence choose in.

And though so easily learnt, and brief
Is the form our new faith's put in,
When we've said, "I believe in a Round of Beef,
And live by a leg of Mutton,"
We come to another region of facts,
That are met quite as well by the Gospel and *Acts*
As by any teaching that's newer—
Life has its problems hard to clear,
And its knots too stiff to be cut by the sneer
Of the sharpest, smartest Reviewer.



A DIALOGUE IN 1863

“WELL, what news have you got to-day,
neighbour ?” “Why, the Prince is
going to be wed

To the Princess Royal of Denmark.” “Ay, so I
hear it is said,

And she’ll be a grand young lady, there’s no
doubt at all ; but you see

I never set eyes on the Prince in my life, and
he knows nought about me.”

“And what other news have you got, neigh-
bour ?” “Oh, terrible news ; abroad
The great Garibaldi’s taken and wounded.”

“Was he some Lord
Or King ? But I know so little of these people
beyond the sea,
They seem to be always fighting, it’s a pity they
cannot agree.”

“Why, then, if you come to fighting, the
Yankees are at it still,
As hard as ever they were at the first.” “Well,
they must then, if they will.

88 A Dialogue in 1863

I suppose they're a sort of cousins of ours ; but
then they're so very far
Removed, that it doesn't much matter to us
how long they go on with the war."

"Now there you are out for once, neighbour,
for its neither more nor less
Than their keeping up of this war so long that's
causing our great distress.
They've given up growing their cotton, and
sending us any to spin,
And that's the way things keep going wrong,
you see, when once they begin.

"You're not a reader like me, neighbour, or
you wouldn't soon forget
The things that they tell in the papers ; my
word, but they're sharply set
In Lancashire now ; and it's my belief, that if
things don't soon work through
They'll be taking to dying off pretty fast, if
they've nothing else left them to do.

"Why now, how would *you* like it, neighbour?
I think you would look rather blank
If you hadn't a shilling left in the house, nor a
guinea left in the Bank,

If first you'd to part with your silver watch, and
 then with your handsome clock,
 And then with your quilt, and blankets, and
 bed, till at last you came to the stock !

“ Until when you looked about your room there
 was nothing to see at all
 But just a table, perhaps, and a chair, and the
 roof and the floor and the wall.
 And how would you like to sell your best black
 coat that you've worn so long ?
 Or your wife to have to go out and pawn her
 good Sunday cloak for a song ? ”

“ I shouldn't like it at all, neighbour, and as to
 my wife, why she
 Would take on, perhaps, if all were known, a
 great deal worse than me.”

“ And then when there's nothing to do, you
 see, there's always so little to eat ;
 And only think of the children, neighbour, how
 they must be missing their meat !

“ Now there's that curly Jem of yours, that
 likes nothing he gets so well
 As what he gets with his granny and you, as
 I've heard you so often tell,

That just when you're sitting down to your
meat he's sure to come peeping in,
You wouldn't like it so well, neighbour, to
see him growing thin."

"I shouldn't like it at all, neighbour, I tell
you, but where's the good
Of talking when folks are starving? sure I'd
help them if I could."

"Well, there's nothing so easy as that, neigh-
bour, you haven't got far to send—
It's only like taking a bit of your dinner across
to an ailing friend."

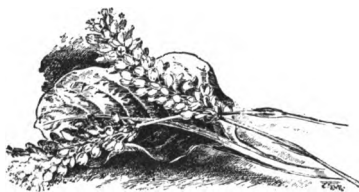
"Why not quite so easy as that, neighbour, for
if things are as bad as you say,
It's little to better them that we can do by
giving them once in a way."

"Well, giving them once in a way perhaps
would come rather short; but then
There is nothing to stop us, that I can see,
from giving them once and again."

"Why that's very pretty talk, neighbour, but
then to be always giving
Doesn't come quite so easy to folks like us that
have to work hard for our living."

“ Well, as to the matter of that, neighbour, if
we haven’t got much to spare
There’ll just be the less to send, but still we
may always have something to share.

“ We might all of us give far more than we
do, without being a bit the worse ;
It was never yet loving that emptied the heart,
or giving that emptied the purse.
We must be like the woman our Saviour
praised, and do but the best we can.”
“ Ay, that’ll be just the plan, neighbour, that’ll
be just the plan.”



A CHRISTMAS CAROL

1863

IF ye would hear the Angels sing
“Peace on earth and mercy mild,”
Think of Him who was once a child,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

If ye would hear the Angels sing,
Christians ! see ye let each door
Stand wider than ever it stood before,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Rise, and open wide the door ;
Christians, rise ! the world is wide,
And many there be that stand outside,
Yet Christmas comes in the morning.

If ye would hear the Angels sing,
Rise and spread your Christmas fare ;
’Tis merrier still the more that share,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Rise, and bake your Christmas bread ;
Christians, rise ! the world is bare,
And bleak, and dark with want and care,
Yet Christmas comes in the morning.

If ye would hear the Angels sing,
Rise and light your Christmas fire ;
And see that ye pile the logs still higher,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Rise, and light your Christmas fire ;
Christians, rise ! the world is old,
And Time is weary, and worn, and cold,
Yet Christmas comes in the morning.

If ye would hear the Angels sing,
Rise and spice your wassail bowl
With warmth for body, and heart, and soul,
On Christmas Day in the morning.

Spice it warm, and spice it strong,
Christians, rise ! the world is grey,
And rough is the road, and short is the day,
Yet Christmas comes in the morning.

If ye would hear the Angels sing,
Christians! think on Him who died;
Think of your Lord, the Crucified,
On Christmas Day in the morning.



GO AND COME

THOU sayest to us, "Go,
And work while it is called to-day; the
sun
Is high in heaven, the harvest but begun;
Can hands oft raised in prayer, can hearts that
know
The beat of Mine through love and pain be slow
To soothe and strengthen?" still Thou sayest
"Go;
Lift up your eyes and see where now the Line
Of God hath fallen from you, one with Mine
Your Lot and Portion. Go, where none
relieves,
Where no one pities, thrust the sickle in
And reap and bind, where toil and want and sin
Are standing white, for here My harvests grow;
Go, glean for Me 'mid wasted frames outworn,
'Mid souls uncheered, uncared for; hearts for-
lorn,
With care and grief acquainted long, unknown
To earthly friend, of Heaven unmindful grown;

In homes where no one loves, where none
believes,
For here I gather in My goodly sheaves ;"
Thou sayest to us, "Go."

Thou sayest to us, "Go
To conflict and to death ;" while friends are few
And foes are many, what hast Thou to do
With peace, Thou Son of Peace ? A man of war
Art Thou from Youth. When Thou dost girded
ride,
Two stern instructors, Truth and Mercy, guide
Thy hand to things of terror ; friends and foes
Thine arrows feel ; a sword before Thee goes,
And after Thee a fire, confusion stirred
Among the nations even by the word
Of Meekness and of Right ; "Yea, take and
eat
Of these my words," Thou sayest, "They are
sweet
As honey ; yet this roll that now I press
Upon your lips will turn to bitterness
When ye shall speak its message ; lo, a cry
Of wrath and madness, ere the ancient Lie
That wraps the roots of earth will quit its hold,
A shriek, a wrench abhorred ; and yet be bold,

Oh, ye my servants ! take my rod and stand
Before the King, nor fear if in your hand

It seem unto a serpent's form to grow ;
Rise up, my Priests ! my Mighty Men, with
sound

Of solemn trumpet, walk this city round,
A blast will come from God, His word and will
Through hail, and storm, and ruin, to fulfil ;
Then shall ye see the towers roll down, the wall
Built up with blood, and tears, and tortures,
fall,

And from the living grave the living Dead
Will rise, as from their sleep disquieted ;

O Earth, this baptism of thine is slow !
Not dews from morning's womb, not gentle
rains

That drop all night can wash away thy stains.
The fire must fall from Heaven ; the blood
must flow

All round the altar ;"—still Thou sayest, "Go."

And that Thou sayest, "Go,"
Our hearts are glad ; for he is still Thy friend
And best beloved of all, whom Thou dost send
The farthest from Thee ; this Thy servants
know ;

Oh, send by whom Thou wilt, for they are blest
Who go Thine errands ! Not upon Thy breast
We learn Thy secrets. Long beside Thy tomb
We wept, and lingered in the Garden's gloom ;
And oft we sought Thee in Thy House of Prayer
And in the desert, yet Thou wert not there ;
But as we journeyed sadly through a place
Obscure and mean, we lighted on the trace
Of Thy fresh footprints, and a whisper clear
Fell on our spirits,—Thou Thyself wert near ;
And from Thy servants' hearts Thy name
adored

Brake forth in fire ; we said, " It is the Lord."
Our eyes were no more holden ; on Thy face
We looked, and it was comely ; full of grace,
And fair Thy lips ; we held Thee by the feet,
We listened to Thy voice, and it was sweet,
And sweet the silence of our spirits ; dumb
All other voices in the world that be
The while Thou saidest, " Come ye unto Me,"
The while Thou saidest, " Come."

We said to Thee, " Abide
With us, the night draws on apace ;" but, lo !
The cloud received Thee, parted from our
side,

In blessing parted from us! Even so
The Heaven of Heavens must still receive
Thee ; dark
And moonless skies bend o'er us as we row,
No stars appear, and sore against our bark
The current sets ; yet nearer grows the shore
Where we shall see Thee standing, never more
To bid us leave Thee. Though Thy realm is
wide,
And mansions many, never from Thy side
Thou sendest us again ; by springs serene
Thou guidest us, and now to battle keen
We follow Thee, yet still, in peace or war,
Thou ledest us. Oh, not to sun or star
Thou sendest us, but sayest, " Come to Me ;
And where I am, *there* shall My servants be."
Thou sayest to us, " Come."



100 A Song which None but

A SONG WHICH NONE BUT THE REDEEMED CAN SING

WE came not in with broad
Full canvas swelling to a steady breeze,
With pennons flying fair, with coffers stored ;
For long against the wind, 'mid heavy
seas,
With cordage strained and splintered masts,
we drave ;
And o'er our decks had dashed the bitter
wave,
And lightening oft our lading, life to save,
Our costly ventures to the Deep were given.
Yea, some of us were caught, and homewards
driven
Upon the storm-wind's wings, and some rock-
riven
Among the treacherous reefs at anchor flung,
Felt the good ship break under them, and
clung
Still to some plank or fragment of its frame
Amid the roaring breakers,—Yet we came.

the Redeemed can Sing 101

We came not in with proud,
Firm, martial footstep in a measured tread
Slow pacing to the crash of music loud ;
No gorgeous trophies went before, no crowd
Of captives followed us with drooping head,
No shining laurel sceptred us, nor crowned,
Nor with its leaf our glittering lances bound ;
This looks not like a Triumph, then they said.
With faces darkened in the battle flame,
With banners faded from their early pride,
Through wind and sun and showers of bleaching rain,
Yet red in all our garments, doubly dyed,
With many a wound upon us, many a stain,
We came with steps that faltered,—Yet we came!

Through water and through fire
We came to Thee, and not through these alone,
We came to Thee by blood. Thou didst require
One only sacrifice, and like Thine own,
The life Thou gavest us Thou didst desire,
And all was ready for us. Lo, the knife
And cloven wood were waiting ; bound or free
We too were ready ! In the battle strife
Or by the lonely altar, unto Thee
We offered love for love, and life for life ;

102 A Song the Redeemed Sing

Through swords, through seas, o'er sands of
burning flame

We came to Thee ! through toil and pain and
loss ;

Yea, all things failed us but the steadfast cross,
And hearts that clave to it while grief and
shame

Still followed where we followed,—Yet we
came !



III
The Soul's Legend





A MYSTERY

THEY played of old within a garden ; the beautiful child and her companion, who was nobler and more beloved than she.

I know not of her race or lineage, but he was the son of a mighty King.

His, too, were the strength and the wisdom, therefore he owed her the more tender love,

For she was framed to listen to, and to be lured by all things. She would eat of the wild, harsh berry, and sport with the glittering snake.

And when she ran, she would often stumble ; yet her fall was among grass and flowers, and the earth whereon she fell lightly, itself helped her to rise.

It loved her, for she belonged to it : a happy child ! the nursling of earth's warm bosom, beloved by the Chosen of Heaven.

How came it that she was lured from the blissful garden? Is there other love beside that which is of Heaven and of Earth?

A love which is dark and secret, which preys upon that which it cannot win?

Or was their love but hatred for him who loved her? Him, who dwelt with one whom no foe can reach;

So that when they sharpened their keenest arrow they could only wound him through her breast;

And he, beneath the cedar's thick pavilion, knew that his beloved dwelt among a fierce and outcast tribe;

And from afar he saw her grinding at their mills, and from afar he saw her lead their midnight dance.

She was now their toiling drudge: now was she their minion and their queen; she was always their thrall and bond-slave.

She wandered with them over many lands; they gave her to eat of a sweet and maddening root.

They taught her the secret of their spells and death-snares, until, being weaker, she became more vile than they:

The interpretress of their dreams of evil ; and the earth, because it loved her, helped her and clave unto her still.

And to her the fierce whoop of battle, the wild dance upon the withered heath,

The warm dusk gloom of the wigwam, the powwow's drowsy chant, seemed more sweet than had been to her the garden. She said, "I will return to it no more."

Yet sometimes in the night's deep silence, when the wind brought on it the odour of the cedar, a thrill would pass across her darkened heart.

Then would she answer her brother softly, and her songs were only less sweet than his own.

PART II

The forest was dark at noon-day ; the wild beasts came forth from their lairs ;

But not as they come forth at midnight, when the wood wakes to life and tumult ; all was silent as the grave ;

Only from the distance was a crash heard, as of a giant tree that fell.

And in the heart of the gloomy forest, where the pine-boughs cast their thickest shade,

A red light shone and flickered, like the gleaming of a cruel eye ;

Where the fires of death were kindled, dark forms flitted round an open space.

In the midst of it was a captive bound to a stake ; the young braves taunted him in their songs.

I know not if he saw their fierce gestures, or heard their loud insulting cries.

He had been, like them, a warrior ; yet he was silent : it was not of them he thought.

And through the dull clamour of the tombs, the fierce roll and beat of the drums,

He stood, without word or movement. The Fleka dance began.

Swift and stealthy were the movements of the dancers, like the weaving of a muttered charm :

It wove round him in mazy circles, that drew ever more close and close ;

Like the winding coil of a serpent, that tightens before it strikes.

And she who led it was a woman, strangely and richly clad.

The air was dark with arrows, when suddenly one flashed forth,

That was buried in the captive's breast. I know not from whose hand it came.

And at that moment his eye met hers ; long sought for, and found at last.

In his look was no rebuke nor question : it left her not while life remained ;

Nor did it change in its steadfast meaning ; it had but one word to say.

"Thou," it said to her, and "thou" she answered. She, too, had no other word to speak.

She thought not of the cruel arrow ; she remembered not that she stood among his foes.

Her gaze was, like his unshrinking. How shall I speak of what their look told ?

None like it hath been exchanged between earth and heaven. It was recognition, and therefore love.

PART III

"Oh, that I might look on him whom I have pierced ! that I might see his face once more !

For when the arrow sank into the heart of my beloved, then did it cleave through my own.

And when he died, I knew that I loved him. I knew myself worthy of his love.

And now will I arise and look upon his face ; he will not remember mine.

For days have passed over me, and years and ages. I have dwelt in a wild and desert place.

It is long since we played within the happy garden, long since he looked upon me from the cruel stake.

Long, too, since he hath sent me any word of greeting ; yet I know that my brother is yet alive."

Then she arose up with the earliest morning ;
it was autumn and the woods were still ;

But as she passed along the green forest
tracks swiftly, a single leaf fell,

A crimson leaf, that dropped upon her bosom
lightly. I saw not from what tree it came.

And from the bough one only bird sang
sweetly, a bird whose breast has been marked
by fire ;

The bird who forsakes not, nor is forsaken ;
who stays when the rest have flown.

And as the day drew onwards to the evening,
she came forth upon a boundless plain,

Whereof had been reaped a mighty harvest ;
the ground was trodden and bare ;

Yet I heard no shouting of the reapers, nor
saw gleaners carrying home their sheaves ;

But from afar a sound broke upon the stillness, the clashing of spear and shield ;

The tramp of a countless multitude, as of men who march in order and array of battle.

And when she drew near the happy garden, the garden where she had played of old,

She found herself in a place she knew not, in a place that knew her no more.

For adown its cool moss-grown walks, and beneath its dark fragrant cedars,

Moved ranks and ranks of angels, in exercise for glorious war.

All mailed were they in shining armour, terrible to the eye and heart ;

And at their head was one who was their prince and leader ; terrible, though not clothed in mail,

Him to whom she had been minded to send a secret message. But while she mused thereon in thought,

And lingered beneath the shadow of the cedar, a sudden light sprung forth,

That searched through and through the garden like a keen insatiate arrow.

Light fell within the rose's heart from the red flushing of the evening sky.

It bloomed blood-red against the darkening
cedar-bough ; the lilies stood up in flame ;

Even the marigold looked no longer friendly ;
it was orbed and rayed with fire.

From the weapons and the armour of the
angels flashed lines of intolerable light.

She found no place to flee unto ; no place
save her brother's heart.

She fled onwards swiftly to meet him ;
swiftly he came forward unto her.

He spake to her no word of greeting, but
folded her to his kingly breast.

She clasped her wasted arms about him so
closely that his wound brake forth,

And his blood was sprinked on her raiment ;
it became shining even like his own.

Like his, too, became her mien and aspect.
I know that they will part no more.



DESOLATE, BUT NOT FORSAKEN

This poem is suggested by Rénan's picture (see "Les Apôtres") of the sudden rise of the female character, so deeply lowered by Paganism, to the new and ennobling relations in which it was placed by the first preaching of the Gospel, through the recognition Womanhood receives in Christ.

THEY sat together over the embers of a
decaying fire, in a cavern in the depths of
the wild forests of a western land,

An aged and woe-worn woman, and a man
who was also old ;

But his face was mild and peaceful ; its look
was the look of one who hath been greatly
beloved ;

While hers was like a volume shut and clasped ;
a book that one would fear to open ; that
hath some dark secret hid between its leaves.

Her eyes were dim and restless, and in them
was an endless search, a question that expects
no answer.

And when her gaze ceased to wander, it

114 Desolate, but not Forsaken

seemed fixed on some far distant object, she looked through the cave's low opening into the dark forest gulf beyond; she gazed, but saw nothing.

The air of the cavern was thick and stifling, heavy with some slumberous spell;

Through its entrance, as the wild autumn wind swept by, came a whirl and drift of withered leaves;

While among them, from time to time, was a short, quick rustling heard.

The cave was bare and desolate; but Want was not its only occupant.

From the walls came a glint and presage, a murderous gleam and flicker, the flash of the hatchet that hung there with the crooked knife of war;

On the floor lay arrows stored in sheaves, mixed with herbs in bundles, with gourds also and calabashes, and bowls strangely characterized, filled with costly gums,

The tears and life-blood shed by many a giant of the forest, but not gathered there for healing or for balm.

He spoke to her in many words, in a low and pleading voice;

Desolate, but not Forsaken 115

But her replies were brief and careless ; they were spoken without change of tone.

“These are goodly things whereof thou tellest me ; thy saga is a brave one, but I believe it not.

When our young men fast, have they not also dreams ? and our old men, do they not see visions ? myself am one who can divine !

And if I were indeed, as thou sayest, the daughter of a chief so mighty, how came I, as an infant, to be abandoned by all ?

If I were lost, it were strange that I were so long unsought for ; and if I were forsaken by my father, then is it I who have to forgive.”

And as she spake these words her brow darkened, and the red brands fell from the dying fire.

She was silent, and her companion spake not. Who would reply to the words of one who is so desperate ? to speech that is even as the wind ?

And he with whom she talked was a chosen messenger, one who seeing many things observes them not.

As the fire-light sank yet lower, he looked upon her long and fixedly ; and in his eye there was no rebuke.

K

116 Desolate, but not Forsaken

"When I listen," he said, "to thy voice, I hear not the words thou speakest,

For it minds me, and thy features mind me, of one whom I loved best of all.

And now I know that thou art indeed his sister ; her whom he hath sent me forth to seek."

"Have I, then," she said scornfully, "also a brother ? and doth he, like my father, love me well ?

Thou art truly a bringer of tidings ; for I knew not that in earth or heaven

There were any found to love me, now, or even in days long past,

When I was indeed the gay Malinchi of the tribe among whom I dwell ;

When I wore the embroidered tilma, the rich manta bordered with costly fur ;

When I led for them the war-dance of the arrow, bells swung with the swaying of my robe :

Then would they listen to my songs at evening. The chiefs praised me, the young braves stood silent round.

And now they hold me in derision. Yet, although they know it not, I am still their queen.

Desolate, but not Forsaken 117

For when they cast me off as undelighting, I found I was not spurned by all.

In the forest were many voices, and beckoning hands held forth.

Canst thou number the dark pines around us? Where the trees are thickest, there is ever one other near.

I know not the Father whereof thou speakest; but our Mother is doubtless a mighty one.

I listened to her when none were by to hearken to us; she taught me the secret of her power;

So that he who would win love still comes to me, and he also who hath made a league with hate.

And to those who have made a covenant with death, I can send it on a silent sunbeam.

For many are they that work with me; and even the white innocent flowers

Have yielded up the secret of their souls, not less deadly than that beneath the serpent's fang."

"These things," he answered, "may be even as thou sayest, and thou be evil, as thou dost deem thyself to be.

I know not the lore whereof thou speakest,

118 Desolate, but not Forsaken

neither of the wrong which thou hast suffered
or hast wrought ;

For I was not instructed to judge thee ; I
have only a message to give

From thy brother, who came forth to seek
thee ; who was stolen, was sold, and was slain.

It was on thee he thought when he was
dying ; and behold he hath sent thee a ring,

To be unto thee a sure token : it is graven
with his name and thine.

Thou speakest of spells and of secrets, but
with him is one more mighty.

He bid me tell thee that he hath redeemed
thee upon the tree under which ye played of
old."

Then she said, "Now do I well remember
the garden, and the fourfold stream,

The vine-bough with its heavy cluster, and
the apples' goodly scent.

I have surely heard the voices of my father
and my brother in the woods at eve.

But the noises in the forest are many, I knew
not what words they spake.

But now that thou hast given me his message
plainly, I will go to my brother who hast sought
for me.

Desolate, but not Forsaken 119

It is he who will lead me back unto my father — the father whom he hath never left."

Then she rose up and prophesied ; the dark cavern was filled with light,

So that her companion marvelled greatly.
Was this she who had crouched over the dying fire ?

She said, "Who are these with the evening that come flying, even as the doves ?

Their wings are swift and open ; they cleave the air as with oars of flame.

I hear a quick, joyful rustling. Oh, do ye come all at once,

Sweet friends, by whom I have been so long deserted ? love, trust, fair joy, and hope !

Come, then, to my home, and fear not ;
though this cavern be dark and low,

Though this heart is cold and ruined, unmeet for such gentle guests.

Ye are used to build among ruins ; at your song the desert blooms ;

When ye spread forth your radiant plumage,
the serpent's coil unwinds ;

And my soul rushes free to meet you, for it also is winged and plumed.

120 Desolate, but not Forsaken

Long hath it lain unregarded, among things
broken, defaced, outworn ;

But now shall it shine as doth the silver, and
its feathers be even as the gold !

And at the close of the darkening evening,
at the fall of the dying year,

Its voice shall be heard among the wood-
lands ; its moan shall be more sweet than
song."

October 10, 1870.



CHRISTUS ET ECCLESIA

L'ENVOI

'SPOUSALS of death and love,
My Lord, were thine. For thee, thy
mother earth
Long waited, sad and patient till thy birth,
Barren of all save anguish, loss, and strife,
Although the nurse and mother of all life ;
And when with heart elate through joy and
pride
She brought thee to thy fair affianced bride,
Thee on the threshold found
She fallen ! sad and free
Thy bride was left, yet bound
For evermore to thee !
Thy mother mourns for thee ; she mourns and
raves,
And lifts for thee a voice of loud lament
Through all her woods, and on her winds and
waves
Fraught with wild wail and awful wonderment ;

122 Christus et Ecclesia

And hers are sighs through hollow hemlocks
sent,
And grasses on the dreary uplands bent ;
But the sad bride is silent ; far apart
She moves, as one who knows her lot is hard ;
Thy mother folds her never to her heart ;
Her life is hid in thine ; her way is barred ;
Her end foreseen ; she knoweth she must die
Ere she can come to her beloved nigh.

PART I

I sing a song, ancient and pitiful, the wonder
of earth and heaven,

Of two lovers, affianced before the worlds
were made, who could only be united through
death.

Fair are they in each other's sight, and joyful
in their hour of meeting ; but the day of their
espousals is bitter.

And if ye ask me to unfold these marvels, I
answer, I was not by when the threads were spun

Which weave unseen their meshes between
hades and heaven and earth.

I know not why she, beloved by one so
mighty, was abject ; why he, the Lord of all
things, was suffering and opprest.

I know not why his life was painful and his death so full of shame ; I only know that it was for her he endured both life and death.

And for her truly he died once ; but how often hath she died for him ?

For his sake she died to all things that make life lovely ; yea, even unto love itself.

And if hers was the glory of the union, had she indeed all the gain ?

Is it well with the rough frieze frayed and fretted with the costly inwrought thread of gold ?

With the frail jar of porcelain in which an acorn lies buried ; with the soul that travails with a mighty incessant birth ?

Is it well with the life that is dear unto one far distant, and hated by the many who are near ?

She lived unbeloved by the mother who bare her ; her brethren were full of guile ;

Their words to her were now harsh, now mocking ; they brooked not that she should be their queen.

Dark secrets and spells were round her, mystery, and bondage, and fear. When she plucked the white woodland flower,

124 Christus et Ecclesia

A groan went through the crowded forest,
which said, Thou hast torn out thy mother's
heart ;

So that, wounded by the thorn and brier,
she became like unto them she dwelt with ;
one grieving and causing grief.

She disdained the little sister who alone loved
her ; the sister whom it was given her to rear.

She was proud ; for though she seemed for-
saken, she knew she was beloved by a king.

And she had listened to the voice of charmers,
who told her that she could not err ;

Till she, who had only learnt to walk through
falling, who spoke ever with a stammering
tongue,

Had said, " My footsteps are unerring ; when
I speak there is none who can gainsay.

I deceive not, nor can any deceive me."
Yet who hath so oft wandered, who been so
oft beguiled as she ?

Yet was she beloved in all her wanderings,
beloved and watched over from afar.

And I too loved this woman, and followed
her through every change ;

For I saw that she of all beings created alone
had learnt to love.

And her song was sweeter to me than that
of the bird, her smile dearer than the spring's
first opening flower.

I mourned when I saw her wander ; for her
I pleaded and wept.

PART II

And a time passed over the woman, a time,
and a wondrous change.

For I saw her who had strayed in the dim
forest, who had hidden in the darksome cave ;

Whom the wild beasts of the wood had pitied,
whom the wild fruits of the wood had fed ;

Wrap round her in careless splendour the
purple to which she was not born ;

A robe inwrought with gold and scarlet, a
seamless yet not a stainless robe ;

Her feet that had been bare and bleeding trod
now upon the necks of kings.

Her lords were they, and yet her vassals ; she
ruled over them by many spells,

For she could both frown and flatter ; she
was their queen, their mistress, their slave.

She gave them drink of the wine of her en-
chantments, full mixed, and poured from a cup
of gold.

126 Christus et Ecclesia

She flung within it a pearl most precious,
wherewith the whole world had been too dearly
bought.

And in it, too, was mingled the life-blood of
a heavenly and of a human vine.

She spared not for the crushing of the grape,
its warm tendril, nor its fragrant shoot ;

When she needed her balms and odours, the
trees of the forest wept.

Nor took she any thought for their wounding,
for she trafficked in costly wares,

Ivory, and amber, and coral, the persons and
souls of men.

Her rowers brought her into deep waters ;
their oars flashed silver to the sun.

For her, too, wrought many craftsmen ; the
heavy hammer fell

So loud, that one might scarce hear beneath
it the beat of either pulse or heart ;

But where she came, still followed the clink
of an unseen chain.

She spake fair unto him she hated, unto him
who hated her sore.

For he who had known how to draw
after him the third part of the stars of
heaven,

Knew what was among them written of the
Woman and of her Seed.

And the Dragon hated the Woman ; yet oft
did I behold them as friends.

And when I looked thereon, I marvelled ; I
marvelled, but I loved her still.

For she was alone and sorrowful ; of her sons
there were none to guide her.

And oftentimes would she rise up hastily ; she
fled into the wilderness, she cast aside her
ornaments of gold,

And spake of him whom she alone loved, and
said, " I am a widow, and no queen ! "

And for her I mourned exceedingly ; for her
I pleaded and wept,

That for her there might yet be found on high
a Watcher and a Holy One prevailing,

And for her, among the tender grass, a Root
still wet with the dews of heaven.

PART III

Yet once again I looked upon this woman, in
a time that is yet to come.

It was given unto me to see her, because I
had loved her well.

I saw her in a time when it grew towards

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evening, and the light lay low upon the hills,

In a valley which was wide and desert, beside a river unfed by any stream.

Unfed was that river, but ever feeding ; it brought with it the wealth it caused.

For though its banks were even like the emerald, beyond them stretched the desert sands.

But close by the side of the woman sprung up an ever-springing well,

Over-arched by a lofty palm-tree, and bordered by the flowering rush ;

And a slender rill flowed from it, whereat a wolf lapped even as he ran.

A lion lay couchant near, beside him were three small white loaves.

And I saw that a time had passed over the woman, a time and a wondrous change ;

For she was brown and furrowed as the desert round her, and her attire was poor and mean ;

Grey hairs were upon her, but she regarded them not, for by her side walked one who was young,

And his apparel was soft and delicate, such

as is worn by the dwellers in the houses of kings.

Yet she was in his eyes as one who found favour; he had said unto her, "Thou art all fair."

She spoke unto him in many words, but it was only given me to hear a few—

"*Culpa mea, mea maxima culpa, maxissima culpa mea.*"

Often had these words been spoken in her ear, in many a secret and solitary place ;

But now that she had taken them upon her lips, they were sweeter to him than her sweetest song ;

More costly than had been her bitterest tear ; more precious than the life-blood she had given for him of old.

And he whom she had ever loved heard her. He spake unto her good and comfortable words.

She went up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved ; and I knew that they would part no more.



IV
Camera Obscura





TO MY FRIEND

MARY ELIZABETH M'CHESNEY

(IN 1865)

THE pathway to my heart by few
Is sought, to few that pathway known,
So deep a thicket round it sown,
With grass and moss and weeds o'ergrown
The path itself, half hid from sight.
And hadst thou come with knocking light
Or loud, then from my windows Pain
Had looked, a dreary chatelaine,
And bid thee from the house, unmeet
So bright a guest to entertain.

But thou, with shy misgiving sweet,
Upon the threshold for awhile
Didst pause, and then with footstep fleet,
And ready, gay, victorious smile,

As one unused to plead or sue,
Didst lightly cross it o'er, made bold
By love, and like the Greek of old
Sat down beside my hearth, and there
I found thee seated, kind and fair,
To all around thee giving grace,
As one that takes a wonted place,
Nor causeth toil, nor bringeth care.

Then stay, dear friend, and be thou free
Of all my hospitality!
And doubt not I for thee shall find
Some leaf, some blossom, left behind,
Some bloom evanishing, some tone
That love and joy will not disown,
Some amber rosary of fair
Warm-scented beads, whereon a prayer
Yet lingers, or some amulet
Enshrouded in a golden fret;
And from my lute a strain shall flow,
And in my heart a flower will blow
From out life's very ashes kissed
To life by thee, sweet alchemist!



DEMETER AND CORA

“**S**PEAK, daughter, ‘speak; art speaking
now?”

“Seek, mother, seek; art seeking thou
Thy dear-loved Cora?” “Daughter sweet,
I bend unto the earth my ear
To catch the sound of coming feet;
I listen long, but only hear
The deep, dark waters running clear.”

“Oh! my great mother, now the heat
Of thy strong heart in thickened beat
Hath reached thy Cora in her gloom,
Is’t well with thee, my mother,—tell?”

“Is’t well with thee, my daughter?” “Well
Or ill I know not; I through fate
Queen of a wide unmeasured tomb
Know not if it be love or hate
That holds me fast, but I am bound
For ever! What if I am found
Of thee, my mother, still the bars
Are round me, and the girdling night

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Hath passed within my soul. The stars
Have risen on me, but the light
Hath gone for ever." "Daughter, tell,
Doth thy dark lord, the King of Hell,
Still love thee?" "Oh, too well, too well
He loves! he binds with unwrought chain.
I was not born to be thy mate,
Aides! nor the Queen of pain :
I was thy daughter Cora, vowed
To gladness in thy world above,
I loved the daffodil, love
All lovely, free and gentle things
Beloved of thee. A sound of wings
Is with me in captivity
Of birds, and bees, with her that sings
The shrill Cicala, ever gay
In noon's white heat." "But, daughter,
say
Dost love Aides?" "Now, too bold
Thy question, mother; this be told,
I leave him not for love, for gold;
One lot we share, one life we know,
The Lord is he of wealth and rest,
As well as king of death and pain;
He folds me to a kingly breast,
He yields to me a rich domain.

I leave him not for aught above,
For any God's unsteadfast love
Or fairest mortal form below ;
Thou hast left heaven for earth ; and thou
For thy poor Cora's sake, self-driven,
Hast fled its sunny heights in scorn
And hate, of Zeus unforgiven !
Do mortals love thee ? " Daughter, yea.
They call me their great mother. Corn
And wine I give them when they pray ;
Their love for me their little day
Of life lasts out ; perchance they knew
It was not love for them that drew
Me down to wander where the vine
Is sweet to me, and breath of kine.
Art listening now, my Cora dear ?
Art listening now, my child,—art near ?
Oh that thy kiss upon my cheek
Were warm ! thy little hand in mine
Once more ! Yet, let me hear thee speak,
And tell me of that garden rare,
And of thy flowers, dark, fiery, sweet,
That never breathe the upper air."
" Oh, mother, they are fair, are fair ;
Large-leaved are they, large-blossomed, frail,
And beautiful. No vexing gale

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Comes ever nigh them ; fed with fire
They kindle in a torch-like flame
Half ecstasy, half tender shame
Of bloom that must so soon expire.
But, mother, tell me of the wet,
Cool primrose ! of the lilac-bough
And its warm gust of rapture, met
In summer days,—art listening yet ? ”
“ Art near me, O my Cora, now ? ”



THE LITTLE COMPANIONS

EVEN as a child, I spent many days in a darkened chamber ; but I was happy, for one that I loved was there.

In the afternoon of winter we played together, in the warm hearth-light, long silent games that did not disturb those that sat around.

And as the evening darkened we grew still more quiet : we hoped that they might perhaps forget to tell us it was time for bed.

Intent and breathless, we built up mighty cities, or marshalled the tread of endless caravans ; we knew not whether we played or dreamed while we sailed together over boundless seas, or traversed the desert's interminable sands ; yet felt around us, like the grasp of a strong, protecting arm, the steadfast light of the warm parlour, the crimson of the carpet on which we played, the curtains shutting out the night.

Then, in a low and earnest voice, I would

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tell my companion the stories I used to read. Of Moorish Princesses in their enchanted sleep ; of treasure hid by pirates, locked and guarded by spells of terror in islands of the Spanish main.

While he would talk to me about his tasks and sports ; of school and comrades there.

My companion was a bold and merry boy ; he played at games which I only knew by name. He had been to places I had only heard of ; he had seen the minster at the distant town.

He knew every bend of the little river, the dark pools where the trout lay quiet, and the minnows flashed and gleamed.

He could tell me all about the dwellers at each lonely farm upon the hill-side, and had been upon the dark moors beyond.

Yet through the summer we played still together, under the old sycamore that grew upon the little sunny hill.

We played in the garden, and in the farm-yard ; we looked together down the grass-grown lane. Together we hung upon the swinging gate ; we waited to hear the carts come creaking home ; to see the horses stepping

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slowly through the mellow sunlight ; the men that walked beside them slowly, and sung out from time to time—

“Gee hup!” “Gee Whoa! Dobbin!”—we clapped our hands at the welcome sound.

We knew they would not refuse us anything : they held us on the horses’ broad, slippery backs, as we rode them without saddle home.

When they built up the stacks they let us stand beside them, lifting us, as they mounted higher, in their strong, steady arms.

There came a day in Autumn when the nuts hung thick and ripe in the woody glens that ran between the hills, and the hazels that overhung the stream ;

And all the children went out to gather them ; the day had been talked of long.

They sought out their oldest clothes to scramble through bush and brier.

And one little girl, the prettiest and merriest of all, had patched herself a pocket of many colours. This she wore outside to be the readier filled with nuts.

The children were long in starting ; like bees that are about to swarm.

They hung and murmured in a cluster ; there

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was always something either remembered or forgot.

At last they set forth in triumph ; I went with them as far as the gate.

I looked after them till they were hid by the bending of the lane. They turned to shout me a loud good-bye.

The little girl waved her handkerchief, but my companion did not look round.

I climbed on the gate to watch them ; they were speedily across the brook.

I saw them spread and scatter over the hill-side ; every now and then they were lost to view,

When they dipped within the coppices of birch and alder, that were purpled in spring with the hyacinths' tender and misty bloom.

At last they reached the great oak-wood. I saw them pass one by one within it ; their voices died one by one away.

On my way home I went into the garden. All within it was still and dreamlike.

The sunflowers held up their broad, flashing shields ; the hollyhocks stood erect like guards and warders. The bright asters, the red verbenas, the dark tawny marigold, blazed in

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the heat of noon. The garden looked gay yet desolate, as if the heart within it, even while it slumbered, ached.

A ripe peach had dropped from the wall, and rolled into the bed of *mignonette* beneath. I did not stoop to pick it up.

And as I passed the little border I called my own, I saw that the clove-carnation had burst its sheath.

I thought it would be less solitary in the farmyard; there would be the cooing and fluttering of pigeons, and I should hear the whirl of the thrasher's flail.

It too was broad and sunny in the noonday, full of yellow, floating light, and the warm pleasant scent of the straw. Yet I thought it looked more lonely, even than the garden; when suddenly from behind the biggest stack, my little companion jumped out and stood before me, saying, with a merry laugh,—

“Aha! I have given you a fine surprise! *and did you think I had really gone?*”

We played together till the rest came back; the summer day was not long.



THE HOMEWARD LANE

“Siehst du sehr geblässlich aus ?
Seyst getrost ! du bist zu Haus.”—HEINE.

MY soul within me yearned
For home ; not yet appeared
The father's house in sight :
I saw no kindled light
In gleaming window pane,
No forms arrayed in white
Came forth, yet was I cheered
At heart : I knew I neared
My home, and kept aright
The way.

My footsteps turned
Adown a well-known lane,
Lone, quiet ; on each side
A grassy margin wide,
And hedgerows freshened to the deepened
stain
Left by warm summer rain.

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O'er all a sparkle wet ;
An odour dank and cool
From Balsam poplars set
Within the hedge, and yet
A sunset flash from many a tiny pool.

Then saw I on a gate
Two men in garments plain
That leant, as in the summer evenings late
Men lean ; of common things
And themes to dwellers in the country dear,
If husbandmen or kings,
They spake, nor ceased their talk as I drew near ;
But with a quiet smile
One open held the gate ;
The other spake, " For thee, I said, long while
Here would I stand and wait."
But when I would have turned within, I saw
A sandy heath forlorn
That stretched, whereon an aged woman, bent
With care and toil outworn,
Stooped down to pluck a small white rose, that
grew
As if it lived with but its leaves to strew
The thin, light soil, nor seemed, sunfed, the dew
To need, beset with many a grieving thorn ;

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But when she, turning, lifted up her head
I looked upon the face
Of one long loved by me and with the dead
Long numbered, there no trace
Of age or pain I read,
But in her deep-set eye
Dwelt untold ecstasy,
And in her smile was bliss,
And rapture in her kiss,
And heaven in her embrace.



THE PLAYMATES

"The natural man receiveth not the things that be of the Spirit of God, neither indeed can he ; for these two are contrary the one to the other."—ST PAUL.

"Then I heard a voice, extremely sweet and clear—the voice of an angel—repeat, *John Woolman is dead*; and I knew not what these words might signify, seeing that I remained yet in the body ; but the voice continued yet to repeat clearly, *John Woolman is dead*, then I understood them to refer to the death of my natural will."—JOHN WOOLMAN'S "Diary."

I HAD a playmate sweet and wild,
We were born together, I and he,
And well did I love him, as youth and as
child
Oft would we chide and yet still agree.

Oft would we chide though I loved him well,
Then was I told by a stern decree,
Never could we together dwell,
One must perish, I or he ;

M

Yet was our day together sweet,
Yet was our night together dear,
He was ever the first my step to greet,
I loved him absent, I loved him near.

Our nay was kind, and sweet our yea,
His doom was from Heaven and not from me,
Never had I the heart to slay
My brother that was so dear to me ;

I saw him fade in a still decay,
He sank at my side while our youth was glad,
And the light from the valley died away,
And the hills seemed many, and dark, and
sad ;

And I find now not though the world be wide,
I find not any I love so well,
And I deem he will run again by my side
Through some sweet abiding miracle.

Now there blossoms for me a heavenly vine,
And in Heaven is a rose-tree blooming free,
But the wild sweet briar and the red-berry
wine
Had been joy enough for him and for me.



THE ALMOND BOUGH

"The almond-tree shall flourish, and desire shall fail."—THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES.

Written in October

THE wild wind gathers and grows
On the moor and the darkening hill,
On the river comes and goes
And creeps a breath that is chill,
The moments weary and wound
No longer, all is still.
From the valley comes no sound,
No footstep along the lane,
No hand on the clinking gate,
No shadow falls on the pane ;
I listen not, neither wait,
My spirit is unelate.
I wish not, neither have will.

Written early in March 1874

But now through a lofty arch
The light clouds drifting flee,

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The wind is lifting the larch,
There is one that asketh for me :
 He is winged with the wind, his feet
In the fire have oftentimes trod,
 He is onwards borne by the sweet
Fulfilled desire of God ;
 When he moveth he moveth aright,
No shadow after him moves,
 His eyes are with flame alight,
His smile is the smile that loves,
 He is lithe, he is fleet, his hair
On his shoulders falleth free,
 Than the sons of man more fair,
He bringeth a gift for me.

A rod of the almond bough,
It is soft, it is fair, it is frail,
 And oft hath it met ere now
The scorn of the driving gale ;
 It weareth no shading leaf,
It beareth no grieving thorn,
 Its blossom is swift and brief,
Its glory is in its morn ;
 It knoweth not how to wait,
It lifts to the bitter sky
 Its rose-flush delicate,

The Almond Bough 151

It knows how to bloom and die ;
Its fruit is not prized nor rare,
Yet it yieldeth a costly seed,
It is borne by a herald fair,
And it sayeth unto me "Speed."



LILIES

"The evening and the morning make our day."

—E. B. BROWNING.

BY woody walks, near pathways dank
With the drip of the thick-wove boughs
they grew,
By the side of the garlic, wild and rank,
The valley-lilies, pure as dew.
Shrouded and swathed in a tender gleam,
Gold in the sun, and dim in the shade,
Lilies globe-like, and orbéd, and rayed,
Flashed, afloat on the glittering stream ;
Each on its cool, thick leaf apart,
Flung eager-wide to day's golden dart,
As a door will ope with a secret thrill
To a touch beloved, each warm trembling
heart
For the light of the morning to flood and fill.
At mid-day the lilies stood up tall,
Stood up straight, 'neath the garden wall,

White and regal like queens that bear
 Beneath their crowns disconsolate
A weight of woe and a world of care,
Who are glad when the night bears all away,
Yet are ever queens through their long white
 day,
 Robed and fair and desolate.
Golden were some, and some had curled
Their leaves back in pride or in scorn of the
 world,
And some were tawny and streaked and pied
 And freck'd, as if in them something ill
 Had passed, but had left them lilies still.
And after them came a sworded strife
Of lilies that warred with death or with life,
 Flushed or pallid with love or hate
I know not which, for to living flame
 They changed from their rose-bloom delicate,
And strove, so that neither overcame ;
 For as I marvelled thereat, day grew
More dim, and the flowers' sweet miracle
 Went by, and a sudden twilight fell,
And with it brought to my soul the scent
 Of mossy wood-walks drenched in dew,
And of valley-lilies crushed and bent.



154 The Man with Three Friends

THE MAN WITH THREE FRIENDS

(A story told in the "Gesta Romanorum")

TO one full sound and quietly
That slept, there came a heavy cry,
"Awake! arise! for thou hast slain
A man." "Yea, have I to my own pain,"

He answered; "but of ill intent
And malice am I that naught forecast
As is the babe innocent.

From sudden anger our strife grew,
I hated not, in times past,
Him whom unwittingly I slew."

"If it be thus indeed, thy case
Is hard," they said; "for thou must die,
Unless with the Judge thou canst find grace.
Hast thou, in thine extremity,
Friends soothfast for thee to plead?"

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Then said he, " I have friends three :

One ¹ whom in word, and will, and deed
From my youth I have served, and loved before
Mine own soul, and for him striven ;
To him was all I got given,
And the longer I lived, I have loved him more.

And another ² have I, whom, sooth to tell,
I love as I love my own heart well ;
And the third, ³ I cannot now call
To mind that ever loved at all
He hath been of me, or in aught served ;
And yet, maybe, he hath well deserved
That I should love him with the rest.

Now will I first to the one loved best."
Said the first, " And art thou so sore bestead ?
See, I have gained of cloth good store,
So will I give thee three ells and more
(If more thou needest) when thou art dead,
To wrap thee. Now hie away from my door ;
I have friends many, and little room."

And the next made answer, weeping sore,
" We will go with thee to the place of doom :
There must we leave thee evermore."

¹ The world.

² Wife and children.

³ Christ.

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“ Alack,” said the man, “ and well-a-day ! ”

But the third only answered, “ Yea ; ”

And while the man spake, all to start soon,

Knelt down and buckled on his shoon,

And said, “ By thee in the Judgment Hall

I will stand, and hear what the Judge decree ;

And if it be death, I will die with thee,

Or for thee, as it may befall.”



V
Scattered Poems





THE EDELWEISS

I WAS born in my little shroud,
All woolly, warm, and white ;
I live in the mist and the cloud,
I live for my own delight.

I see far beneath me crowd
The Alpine roses red,
And the gentian blue, sun-fed,
That makes the valleys bright.

I bloom for the eagle's eye,
I bloom for the daring hand,
I live but for God, and I die
Unto Him, and at His command.



HAY-MAKING

MANY a long, hard-working day
Life brings us, and many an hour of
play,
But they never come now together.
Playing at work, and working at play,
As they came to us children among the hay
In the breath of the warm June weather.

Oft with our little rakes at play
Making believe at making hay,
With grave and steadfast endeavour ;
Caught by an arm, and out of sight
Hurled and hidden, and buried light
In laughter and hay for ever.

Now pass the hours of work and play
With a step more slow, and the summer's day
Grows short, and more cold the weather.
Calm is our work now, and quiet our play ;
And we take them apart as best we may,
For they come no more together.



GOING TO BED

“IT is time to go to bed.”
Oh! how soon the words are spoken,
Oh! how sweet a spell is broken
When these words of fate are said—
“It is time to go to bed.”
Is it time to go to bed?
Surely bed awhile can wait
Till the pleasant tale is read
At our Father’s knee; how cheery
Burns the fire! we are not weary;
Why should it be time for bed
Just because the clock strikes eight?
While they talk, let us be hiding
Just behind the great arm-chairs;
It may be they will forget us,
It may be that they will let us
Stay to supper, stay to prayers;
Go at last with them upstairs,
Hand in hand, with Father, Mother;
Kisses given, and “good nights” said,
’Twill be time for Sister, Brother,
Time for me to go to bed!



NOAH'S ARK

MANY a story told,
Earth! thy tale survives ;
In a quiet fold
Leading happy lives,
Dwell this old world's old
Fathers with their wives.

From the tight-packed box
O'er the carpet spread,
Oh! what peaceful flocks
In the fire-light red
Wander, from rude shocks
Duly shepherded.

Loved with equal love,
Prized with equal care,
Raven then and Dove ;
But the dearest there
Are still the spotted Ladybird
And the springing Grasshopper.

Now does childish play
That sweet tale rehearse
Told by Prophet grey,
Sung in Sybil's verse,
Of a Coming Day,
Of a vanquished curse.

See the Cow and Bear
Together dwell and feed,
Ox and Lion there
In sweet peace agreed ;
Wolf and Lamb one pasture share,
With a little child to lead.



164 The Castle Garden

THE CASTLE GARDEN

I SING beneath the moon,
I sing at burning noon ;
A song of war I sing, a song of love ;
And all to win her grace,
And all to see her face
Look on me for a moment from above.

The hills in quiet deep,
Sleep out their noontide sleep ;
The woods are silent, yet within my breast
Is trouble, and a sound
Seems rising from the ground
To tell of tumult and of old unrest.

Methinks, the very flowers
Have instincts of the hours,
When here four hundred warriors, each a knight,
Back from this Border Hold
Drove Scotland's Lion bold,
With glint of steel, and clang of armour bright.

The scarlet lilies burn
Like fiery swords that turn
Each way at Eden's gate, and flame and fail

The Castle Garden 165

As if in angel's hand
Each were a vengeful brand
That flashed into the air blood-red, death-pale.

The shining marigold,
Whose yellow disk hath told
The hours in light, shows here a tawny stain,
As on a dagger's hilt
A ruddy life-drop spilt,
Rusts through long years, a witness stern and
plain.

The latest summer rose,
Red to its heart-leaf glows ;
I know not be its hue of blood, or wine ;
The passion-flowers frail,
Would hint at some dark tale
As o'er the moulding wall they trail and
twine.

The voice of harp and song
Hath here been silent long ;
Wild echoes of the revel wake not here ;
Yet, knit within these stones
Are pangs, wherefore atones
No tardy vow, no lingering penance drear.

166 The Castle Garden

Here dwelt a chief, to woo
Too proud, too fierce to sue,
He took from all what pleased him. Strife
and ire ;
Blood, steel, and burning flame,
Tracked on his steps, and shame
That cowered by wasted hearths, with wife,
maid, sire.

O'er him no prayer was said,
For him no tear was shed,
When his dark spirit passed away unshriven.
Too many tears below,
His sword had made to flow,
That one should plead betwixt his doom and
heaven.

Yet here beneath the moon,
Yet here at burning noon,
I sing my constant song, a song of love ;
And all to win her grace,
And all to see her face
Look on me for a moment from above.

THE GANG-CHILDREN

(Extract)

SOME things perhaps they miss,
That other children see—
The evening chat, and the kiss,
And the ride on daddy's knee ;
To be tucked in their little beds
By a mother's loving care,
For at night they lay down their heads
And sleep—just anywhere.
Perhaps they have never heard
Of Christ or of God, nor could tell
Who made them ; not a word
Can the children read nor spell ;
Yet they are not dull nor slow
Though they've gone to no village school ;
There's many a thing they know
That is not learnt by rule.
They play at no little games,
But they've learnt the wicked song,
And with each of earth's nameless shames
They've been acquainted long.

168 The Gang-Children

They've heard no sweet story told,
By the fire as the shadows fell,
But of evil,—new and old,—
They can give you the chronicle ;
For they've learnt, and more quickly too,
For oaths and for jeers, and for blows,
All that the pagan knew,
All that the savage knows.

What matter ! the world grows old.
To toil, and to sin, and to die,
Is a story so often told
It never need make us sigh.
What is it ?—a girl and a boy—
They are poor ; they were never meant
To be the light and the joy
Of the homes to which they were sent.
In our nation's mighty schemes,
In the world's great working plan,
There was no room left it seems
For a woman, or for a man ;
Blighted before they are blown,
Let them sink to the earth like weeds,
So long as our crops are grown,
So long as the sea recedes.

The Gang-Children 169

“What shall it profit a man,”
Is a saying widely known,
“Let him win and gain all he can,
If he lose his soul,—his own?”
But speed to the giant plough,
And the harrow that grinds and rolls
O’er the broad smooth levels, now
Over other people’s souls.

Oh! cruel lords of the soil,
No wonder your harvests glow
With ruddy and golden spoil,
When the earth is so fat below;
When you joy in your harvest won,
Do you think of your harvest lost,
And hid from the ripening sun?
Have you counted up the cost
Of the precious seeds forgot,
Flung in with heedless scorn,
In your furrows deep to rot,
That will not come up with the corn?
Girlhood, wifehood, youth,
And love, and all that was lent
Or given to make heaven a truth,
And life a sweet content.

170 The Gang-Children

Manhood, and strength, and joy,
The image Divine of God ;
It is but a girl and a boy
Ye have trampled back to the clod !

Then look o'er your lordly plains,
And go to your crowded mart,
And when ye tell o'er your gains,
Fling in many a broken heart,
And blighted life, with the aches
And pangs of a childish frame,
With the waste and the loss that makes
The tale of a woman's shame ;
With another cry in the streets,
And another ruffian jeer,
And the laugh one so often meets,
Far sadder than is the tear.
Go ! count up the cost of all
That fell with the stones that fell,
When ye shook down the cottage wall
To build up the felon's cell !
Go number the weary feet,
That roam on an aimless track
Of ruin and wrong, nor meet
With aught that can lure them back ;

The Gang-Children 171

Because they have never known
What comfort meant since the day
That left them nought for their own
When ye took their homes away.
When the little daisy died,
That the cottage garden grew,
Withered a nation's pride,
With the rosemary, thrift, and rue.
Hollow the harvest joy
Of the land where the reapers mourn ;
Where the poor man's girl and his boy
Count for less than the rich man's corn.



ATHANASIUS CONTRA MUNDUM

(To the Memory of David Livingstone)

HE stood within the wilderness and cried ;
From hearts innumerable went up a
groan,

But voice was none ; or any that replied ;
Not Europe, vowed to lofty prudence, tied
To dull convention, colder than a stone ;
Not Asia, fierce and fawning, sleek of hide ;

Nor thou, brute Africa ! a patient, strong,
Mute ass, between two burthens couchant long.
He stood within the wilderness and cried ;

Then all at once, as when a mighty tide
Hurls a huge wave before it, heaved and rose
The world's high heart to battle with its foes,
He stayed within the wilderness and died.



GOOD-NIGHT, GOOD-BYE

SAY not good-bye ! dear friend, from thee
A word too sad that word would be.
Say not good-bye ! Say but good-night,
And say it with thy tender, light,
Caressing voice, that links the bliss
Of yet another day with this.
Say but good-night !

Say not good-bye ! say but good-night ;
A word that blesses in its flight,
In leaving hope of many a kind,
Sweet day like this we leave behind.
Say but good-night ! Oh never say
A word that taketh thee away !
Say but good-night !
Good-night !



VI Songs of Salvation



"I believe in the forgiveness of sins."—*The Apostles' Creed.*

"Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."—*Isaiah lvii. 15.*



“THE faintest longing to love, *is* love ; the very dread to miss for ever the face of God, is love ; the very terror at that dreadful state where none can love, is love. Feelest thou thyself dry, seared, impenitent, bewildered, stupefied, without feeling ?—yea, if there be any who can himself scarcely tell what he believes, or whether he believes at all ; let him feel himself abandoned to Satan, unable to distinguish whether blasphemous and impure thoughts be of his own mind or the darts of the Evil One driven through him ; let him be this and all beside which can be imagined miserable, so that covered with the ulcers of his sins he seem to himself to be all one wound, unbound, unclosed, unsoftened, a very living death ; yet if he have any longing to be delivered from the body of his death, he has not committed the unpardonable sin. Those around him may say, ‘Lord, he stinketh ;’ the heavy stone of earthly sins may lie upon him, and he lie motionless, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes so that he cannot approach unto Jesus, and his eyes wrapped round so that he should not see Him ; *yet He whom he cannot seek may yet seek him ;* that voice which awakeneth the dead can reach him yet, and he may hear the voice of the Son of God, and, hearing, live.”—DR PUSEY.



INTRODUCTION TO "SONGS OF SALVATION"

A GAIN we are brought to the foot of the Cross, but this time it is in the utmost simplicity of faith. The interest is no longer that of the intellect but of the conscience, and the heart asks neither How? nor Why? but kneeling there in penitence it asks only, "May I, can I share? Am I not too bad?" The answer comes, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. Go in peace." So true is it that the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

A sample of nearly all the evils in the world may be seen on Calvary; legal justice perverted, blind heartless prejudice winning its own way, a careless multitude going its stupid beaten road to destruction, and a traitor discovered in the inner circle of friendship. Closer to the Cross,

from the bystanders beneath, come insults and mockery that would tear the dignity from suffering, and there too among the victims we hear the voice of reckless blasphemy that is not to be hushed save by death. What faithful love there is, is shown only in the silent heart-break of despair, and the dark curtain of night drops over all. Not all; one soul out of that blackest centre of sin and suffering is redeemed for Paradise, and if one is thus saved, why not all? why not I? From a life of crime and from the sense of punishment deserved, from failing strength and the abysses of mortal pain, that soul stretches out its hands to God and even then finds a ready welcome. Deaf to the curses, blind to the shame, insensible for the moment to the suffering, it looks into the eyes of its Redeemer and sees heaven opening.

Such concentration of experience is possible, and is perhaps more often seen in its full beauty among the less educated. No principles furnished by science, or history, or philosophy, guide their lives, save only the barest working code; the attention is fixed on the narrow field of the individual life with its hopes and duties, its pleasures and pains. But the sordid

calm of lives like these can be broken and the heart touched by the Divine Spirit, and then the past days and years are seen to be full of "sins, negligences and ignorances," which have grown up into a barrier hard and high between the soul and God. The witness of conscience that in all this we are guilty is plain to hear, and there is no gainsaying its testimony. A man in this condition describes himself unhesitatingly as "lost," and a lasting despair comes within sight as being the inevitable and right result of the life of selfishness that has been lived. "I am a sinful man, O Lord." No excuses are offered. Then the eyes of the soul are directed to the crucified Saviour, and He is shown to be the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. There is nothing for the man to do but to accept His death and to thank Him, to abhor the sin that nailed Him there, and to start a life new, clean, and fresh, under His guidance. It may sound complex, but in practice it is very simple. "Jesus died for me." That to millions has meant and still means pardon free and complete; it is a receipt in full for the stupendous debt; it is a crushing load taken off the shoulders and cast

into the depths of the sea ; it is a snapping of the chains of sin, and an opening of the prison to them that were bound ; it is a wall broken down between the soul and God ; it is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness which can never lose its virtue. One illustration is piled on another to try to express the new-found sense of purity and courage, that is yet mingled with tender fear and with a dread of sin never known before. When the Spirit of God is the teacher it is not the reason that is primarily appealed to, but it is the heart that is attracted by the vision of love and goodness,—

“I am not skilled to understand
What God hath willed, what God hath planned ;
I only know at His right hand
 Stands one who is my Saviour.
I take God at His word and deed,
‘Christ died to save me,’ this I read,
And in my heart I find a need
 Of Him to be my Saviour.”

This is the Atonement in its simplest form. The ideas in it are not wholly new, or the human mind could not understand it. We have all of us, thank God, known some loving soul who willingly bore toil and weariness for the sake of the helpless or the ungrateful, but

here we see the central sun of all these scattered and broken rays. Further, it is not the punishment of sin so much as the sin itself from which Christ died to save us. He does not stultify all human ethics by ignoring the bond between sin and death, but honours it to the full, taking its bitter consequences upon Himself.

“He didn’t come to judge the world, He didn’t
come to blame,
He didn’t only come to seek ; it was to save He
came ;
And when we call Him Saviour, then we call Him
by His name.”

That is no cant, no hackneyed tale. Miss Greenwell knew what the Durham pit-villages were like ; she was a constant visitor in the jail and also in every ward of the workhouse, and those were the days when workhouses were unreformed and much neglect and cruelty were to be found within their walls. She engaged in that discouraging labour called “rescue-work,” and she took up the cause of the deaf and dumb and imbecile, and tried to help every unfortunate creature without exception who came within her reach ; there are plenty of such, and with a sad smile she used to say that “the Great Army of the Beaten in

Life " seemed to be her special portion. She never gave up hope, and while giving her best effort to prevent new recruits from entering its miserable ranks, she valiantly worked on with its most seasoned veterans. She did not care for distributing tracts, and had a hundred ways of bright human kindliness by which to stir the stiffened soul and atrophied will into desire and courage, but the outworks once won she found (as all the wisest of such reformers do find) that there was only one thing which could take possession of the heart and carry through the labour of renewal in the life, and that was the Gospel of Christ presented in its simplest form. This really did the work, but nothing else was of lasting use.

Thus it is. The wise and prudent argue, and quite rightly, about the Moral Law and about the only possible way in which God can show, by one deed, hatred of sin and love to man ; those who reason cannot believe or trust or love until reason is in some way satisfied. But the "babes," of whom after all the vast majority of our race consists, inquire into nothing and feel nothing save that there is a way of escape, and that they are pardoned—undeservedly

pardoned, and yet that in future they must lead wholly different lives if they would have Christ to be their friend. Hear the Durham pit-man speaking,—

“I’ve got a word like fire in my heart that will not let me be,—

‘Jesus the Son of God, who loved, and who gave Himself for me.’

And couldst Thou love such a man as me, my Saviour? Then I’ll take

More heed to this wandering soul of mine, if its only for Thy sake.

For it wasn’t that I might spend my days just in work, and in drink, and in strife,

That Jesus the Son of God has given His love and has given His life.”

This, however simply understood, is a glimpse of the divine side of the Atonement. The truth rises upon the soul like a sun, the barrier is smitten down, the demand of conscience is satisfied, and the whole being is flooded with joy and with the love of goodness. We have touched the regenerative point. Like human birth it is a mystery, but there is the fact. We can in some degree at least explain both the life before and the life after, but there is a point that is shrouded from criticism that lies within the secret of the tabernacle when the

curtains are dropped and the door is shut. Joseph sends all the Egyptians out of the room when he is going to make himself known to his brethren. Religion, says Adolf Harnack, has no Geheimnisse, but it has its Heimlichkeiten ; it has no secrets arbitrarily hidden from the outer circle, but it has mysteries of which the many may talk either with disparagement or approval, but which only the few really know. The chief of these is an inner experience which every one might possess, but which to those who do possess it appears like a miracle, a crisis that eludes capture by any ordinary method of statement. To the soul alone with God it comes, and the sins of a black past are swept away by an unreserved forgiveness. All the onward path is flooded with sunshine, and the experience known as "salvation" frees the spirit from limits of time ; it is distant and yet near, future and yet present, beyond comprehension and yet calling for immediate translation into action among the homely conditions of common life. The soul has found out that it is no dweller in time but an inhabitant of eternity, and yet it is straitly bound to the obedient service of its divine Leader who is

ever at hand, guiding it through the half-hours of daily life.

Such is regeneration, and it springs from the sight of the Cross. Here is something that happens in the spiritual world, something far deeper than the sympathy of God with human pain, for here He deals with human sin. Man can deal with pain, one of the fruits of the tree of poison, but God only can deal with sin and lay the axe to its root.

An instinct possessed by the "little children of the kingdom" leads them safely through mazes of doctrine and verbal subtleties and shows them the way to the Cross, the one path that for them is right amid the many possible. This instinct has led them to choose three very simple verses out of this book, and they have been printed and reprinted, and have been loved by thousands who have never known the author's name. They are these,—

"Since my Lord has looked on me, and since He
has bidden me look
Once in my heart, and once in my life, and once in
His blessed book,
And once on the cross where He died for me, He
has taught me that I must mend,
If I'd have Him to be my Saviour, and keep Him
to be my Friend.

Since He's taken this long account of mine, and has
crossed it through and through,
If He's left me nothing at all to pay, He's given me
enough to do,
He's shown me things that I never knew with all
my worry and care,
Things that have brought me down to my knees
and things that will keep me there.

Since He's taken this cold dark heart of mine, and
has pierced it through and through,
He's taught me to grieve both for things that I did,
and for things that I didn't do.
He has shown me the cross where He died for me,
and I'll end where I begin,
With an eye that looks to my Saviour, and a heart
that mourns for its sin."





A SINNER AND HIS SAVIOUR

OH! who are these, too long apart,
When once they've found each other's
heart
Would never from the other part ?
A Sinner and his Saviour.

A sinner I ; but who art Thou
With many crowns upon Thy brow ?
I see the thorn among them now
I know Thee for my Saviour.

Long, long I traced Thy steps ; I heard
Thy voice in many a gracious word ;
I listened till my heart was stirred
To seek Thee for my Saviour.

190 A Sinner and his Saviour

I sought Thee, weeping, high and low ;
I found Thee not ; I did not know
I was a sinner ; even so
I missed Thee for my Saviour.

I saw Thee sweetly condescend
Of humble men to be the friend ;
I chose Thee for my way—my end,
But found not yet my Saviour.

Until upon the cross I saw
My God, who died to meet the law
That man had broken ; then I saw
My sin, and then my Saviour.

What seek I longer ? let me be
A sinner all my days to Thee
Yet more and more—and thou to me
Yet more and more my Saviour.

A sinner all my earthly days,
A sinner who believes and prays,
A sinner all his evil ways
Who leaves for his dear Saviour.

A Sinner and his Saviour 191

Who leaves his evil ways, yet leaves
Not Him to whom his spirit cleaves
More close, that he so often grieves
The soul of his dear Saviour.

Be Thou to me my Lord, my Guide,
My Friend, yea everything beside ;
But first, last, best, whate'er betide,
Be Thou to me my Saviour !



REDEMPTION

I AM not skilled to understand
What God hath willed, what God hath
planned ;
I only know at His right hand
Stands One who is my Saviour.

I take God at His word and deed,
"Christ died to save me," this I read,
And in my heart I find a need
Of Him to be my Saviour.

And was there, then, no other way
For God to take?—I cannot say ;
I only bless Him day by day
Who saved me through my Saviour.

That He should leave His place on high,
And come for sinful man to die,
You count it strange?—so do not I,
Since I have known my Saviour.

In Heaven He found no grief, nor blame
To bear away, no bitter shame
Of death and sin, and so He came
To earth to be its Saviour.

And had there been in all this wide,
Wide world no other soul beside
But only mine, then He had died
That He might be its Saviour ;

One wounded spirit, sore opprest,
One wearied soul that found no rest
Until it found it on the breast
Of Him that was its Saviour ;—

Then had He left His Father's throne,
The joy untold, the love unknown,
And for that soul had given His own,
That He might be its Saviour.

And oh ! that He fulfilled may see
The travail of His soul in me,
And with His work contented be,
As I with my dear Saviour !

Yea, living, dying, let me bring
My strength, my solace from this spring,
That He who lives to be my King,
Once died to be my Saviour !



REPENTANCE

IF the Lord were to send down blessings
from Heaven as fast and as thick as the
fall

Of the drops of the rain, of the flakes of the
snow, I'd love and I'd bless Him for all ;
But the gift that I'd crave, and the gift that I'd
keep if I'd only one to choose,
Is the gift of a broken and contrite heart, for
that God will not refuse.

For what is my wish, and what is my hope,
when I've toiled, and I've prayed, and I've
striven

All the days that I live upon earth ? It is this
—*to be forgiven !*

And what is my wish, and what is my hope but
to end where I begin,

With an eye that looks to my Saviour, and a
heart that mourns for its sin ?

P

What! perhaps you'll think that I'm going to
say I'm the chief of sinners, and then
You'd tell me, for aught that you've ever seen,
I'm no worse than other men.
I've nothing to do with better and worse, I
haven't to judge for the rest ;
If other men are not better than me, they're
bad enough at the best.

I've nothing to do with other folks—it isn't for
me to say
What sort of men the Scribes might be, or
the Pharisees in their day ;
But we know that it wasn't for such as they
that the Kingdom of Heaven was meant,
And we're told we shall likewise perish unless
we do repent.

Why, what have I done, perhaps you'll say,
that should make me fret and grieve ?
I didn't wrangle, or curse, or swear, I didn't
lie or thief ;
I'm clear of cheating, and drinking, and debt ;
well, perhaps, but I cannot say ;
For some of these things I hadn't a mind, and
some didn't come in my way.

And there's many a thing I could wish undone,
 though the law might not be broke,
 And there's many a word, now I come to think,
 that I could wish unspoke.
 I did what I thought would answer the best,
 and I said just what came to my mind ;
 I wasn't so honest that I need boast, and I'm
 sure that I wasn't kind.

For we'll come to the things that I left undone,
 and then there'll be more to say ;
 And we'll ask for the broken hearts that I
 cheered, and the tears that I wiped away ;
 I thought of myself, and wrought for myself—
 for myself and for none beside,
 Just as if Jesus had never lived, and as if He
 had never died.

But since my Lord has looked on me, and since
 He has bid me look
 Once in my heart, and once in my life, and
 once in His blessed book,
 And once on the cross where He died for me,
 He has taught me that I must mend,
 If I'd have Him to be my Saviour, and keep
 Him to be my friend.

Since He's taken this long account of mine,
and has crossed it through and through ;
If He's left me nothing at all to pay, He's given
me enough to do.

He's shown me things that I never knew with
all my worry and care,
Things that have brought me down to my
knees, and things that will keep me there.

He has shown me the law that works in Him,
and the law that works in me,
Life unto life, and death unto death, and He's
asked how these agree.

He has made me weary of self and pelf—Yes !
my Saviour has bid me grieve
For the days and the years when I did not pray,
when I did not love, nor believe.

Since He's taken this cold dark heart of mine,
and has pierced it through and through,
He's taught me to grieve both for things that I
did, and for things that I didn't do.
He has shown me the cross where He died for
me, and I'll end where I begin,
With an eye that looks to my Saviour, and a
heart that mourns for its sin !



CONVERSION

THE PITMAN TO HIS WIFE

SIT ye down on the settle, here by me, I've
got something to say to thee, wife ;
I want to be a new sort of man, and to lead a
new sort of life :

There's but little pleasure and little gain in
spending the days I spend,
Just to work like a horse all the days of my
life, and to die like a dog at the end.

For where's the profit and where's the good, if
one once begins to think,
In making away with what little sense one had
at the first, through drink ?
Or in spending one's time and one's money, too,
with a lot of chaps that would go
To see one hang'd, and like it as well as any
other show ?

And as to the pleasure that some folks find in
cards or in pitch and toss,
It's little they've ever brought to me but only a
vast of loss ;
We'd be sure to light on some great dispute,
and then to set all right,
The shortest way was to argue it out in a
regular stand-up fight.

I've got a will, dear wife, I say, I've got a will
to be
A kinder father to my poor bairns, and a better
man to thee,
And to leave off drinking, and swearing, and
all, no matter what folks may say ;
For I see what's the end of such things as
these, and I know this is not the way.

You'll wonder to hear me talk like this, as I've
never talked before ;
But I've got a word in my heart, that has made
it glad, yet has made it sore.
I've got a word like a fire in my heart that will
not let me be,
*"Jesus, the Son of God, who loved, and who
gave Himself for me."*

I've got a word like a sword in my heart, that
has pierced it through and through.

When a message comes to a man from Heaven
he needn't ask if it's true ;

There's none on earth could frame such a tale,
for as strange as the tale may be,

Jesus, my Saviour, that Thou shouldst die for
love of a man like me !

Why, only think, now ! if it had been Peter, or
blessed Paul,

Or John, who used to lean on His breast, one
couldn't have wondered at all,

If He'd loved and He'd died for men like these,
who loved Him so well,—but you see

It was me that Jesus loved, wife ! He gave
Himself for me !

It was for me that Jesus died ! for me, and a
world of men

Just as sinful and just as slow to give back His
love again ;

He didn't wait till I came to Him, but He
loved me at my worst ;

He needn't ever have died for me if I could
have loved Him first.

And couldst Thou love such a man as me, my
Saviour ! then I'll take
More heed to this wand'ring soul of mine, if it's
only for Thy sake.
For it wasn't that I might spend my days just
in work, and in drink, and in strife,
That Jesus, the Son of God, has given His love
and has given His life.

It wasn't that I might spend my life just as my
life's been spent,
That He's brought me so near to His mighty
cross, and has told me what it meant.
He doesn't need me to die for Him, He only
asks me to live ;
There's nothing of mine that He wants but my
heart, and it's all that I've got to give !

I've got a friend, dear wife, I say, I've got a
Heavenly friend,
That will show me where I go astray, and will
help me how to mend,
That'll make me kinder to my poor bairns,
that'll make me better to thee ;—
Jesus, the Son of God, who loved, and who
gave Himself for me !

THE WIFE'S ANSWER

I'VE listened, Geordie, to all thou's said, and
now that thou's had thy say,
I can but tell thee it's far the best of my hear-
ing this many a day ;
Though many a look thou's given to me, and
many a word thou's said,
I was pleased enough to get and to hear both
before and since we were wed.

Thou wast never much of a one for talk, and I
reckon there's little need
Of a vast of words between two folks that are
always well agreed ;
Yet many a talk we've had to ourselves, just
sitting here by the fire,
But never a one that's been so much to my
heart's content and desire.

For if thou couldst take a look in my heart,
and read from it line by line,
As one reads from out of a printed book, it
would be like this talk of thine ;

204 The Wife's Answer

For I've got a word, a word in my heart, that's
 made it both glad and sore,
And ye'll wonder to hear me talk like this,
 that's never talk'd so before.

For though I've gone both to chapel and
 church, and I've minded what I've heard
 said,
Yet so many things all the sermon through
 would come in and out of my head ;
It might be the bairns, or it might be thee, or
 what we're to get to eat,
Or what we're to get to wear, or how I'd to
 manage to make ends meet,

That I've thought, when I've seen the minister
 stand and give out a beautiful text,
And tell us we're not to take heed for this
 life, but to give all our minds to the
 next ;
It's easier said than it's done for me, what with
 waur-day work to do,
And so many folks just with waur-day talk
 dropping in all the Sunday through.

The Wife's Answer 205

But now my mind's got another turn, and I see
all as clear as glass,
And I've given my heart to the chief concern,
and how it has come to pass
I'll tell thee now that we've once begun—it was
all through our little lass.

For "Mother," says she, as she and I were
going one night upstairs,
"Amn't I old enough," she says, "to give up
saying my prayers?
For I've been seven such a long time now, I
think I'll be eight very soon,
And it's long since I've had a knife and a fork,
and given over using a spoon."

"Why, what dost thou mean by such talk?" I
said, and she turns on me her eyes,
And gives me a look quite innocent, and yet as
wise as wise ;
"Why, mother," she says, "there's a lot
of things, like saying 'I will' and 'I
won't,'
That children are always bid to mind, and that
bigger people don't.

206 The Wife's Answer

“ And brothers, when they were as young as me,
wore their little frocks instead
Of coats and trousers, and little ones are sent
off soon to bed,
And set to learn our AB abs, and I thought
that saying one's prayers
Was just like these,¹ for *I never see any grown-
up folks say theirs.*”

“ O bairn,” I said, “ have done with thy talk,”
for each word was like a knife ;
“ Of lessons, thou's given thy mother one that'll
last her all her life ;”
And I knelt down beside her little bed, and all
that I could say
Was just “ Our Father, Who art in Heaven,”
and “ Lord, teach me how to pray.”

“ And pardon,” I said, “ a sinner's heart, that
comes to Thee on her knees,
And pardon her ways that's been blind so long
that it's only now she sees ;
And pardon,” I said, “ a sinner's life, and give
her Thy grace to mend,
And be Thou to me, and be Thou to mine, a
Saviour and a Friend.”

¹ This was really said by a little girl to her mother.

The Wife's Answer 207

It's been on my mind to tell thee this, but I
thought thou'd think it strange ;
Thou's always got thy own ideas, and thou's
not one given to change,
And I thought I'd just hold my peace and
wait, for its little a woman can
Do at her best, let her do her best, without
the help of her man.

It isn't for me to be leadin' thee, but now that
thou's taken a start,
We'll go together, for didn't we say the words
“ *Until death us part ?* ”
It'll never part us now, Geordie, for we're
seeking the blessed land,
Thou and me and the canny bairns, and we're
seeking it hand in hand !



A GOOD CONFESSION

Suggested by hearing of a tombstone in a country churchyard in Wales, on which was inscribed the name of a man who had lived to some years above eighty, yet was said to be (alluding to his conversion to Christ) only "four years old when he died."

IF you ask me how long I have been in the world, I'm old—I'm very old ;
If you ask me how many years I've lived, it'll very soon be told—
Past eighty years of age, yet only four years old !

Eighty years and more astray upon the mountains high,
In a land that's full of pits and snares, and that's desolate and dry.
I've oft been weary, oft been cold, and oft been like to die ;
And there I'd have wandered, wandered still, as I'd wandered many a day ;

A Good Confession 209

I'd lost the track-marks of the flock, I'd got so
far away,
If Jesus hadn't met me, that seeks for them
that stray.

The Shepherd took me in His arms, for you see
I'm getting old,
And my strength is, as the Psalmist says, gone
like a tale that's told ;
"And other sheep," the Shepherd says, "I
have, and to the fold

"Them also must I bring," for He has many
little lambs,
All milk-white, mild, and innocent, a-skipping
by their dams ;
And many sheep that have been driven along
the dusty roads,
Hard driven along by dogs and men, and
pricked with iron goads,
And marked with iron brands to show they've
oft been bought and sold ;
Brown ragged sheep, with fleeces torn, and
faces wizened and old ;

210 A Good Confession

And if you ask me which of these I think He
 loves the best—
The lambs or sheep—I cannot say ; He'll love
 me with the rest ;
For "Feed my little lambs," he said when He
 gave His flock to keep,
To Peter, *once*, and *twice* He said to Peter,
 "Feed my sheep."

He's got a garden full of flowers, all planted
 row by row,
Roses and pinks and mignonette a-coming into
 blow ;
And many little pleasant herbs that near each
 other grow :

Balm o' Gilead, mint and thyme, and sage and
 marjorie,
And many a dry old stick and stalk, and many
 a withered tree ;
That's neither good for use nor show, and these
 are folk like me ;

And many such-like ones He's got, but Scrip-
 ture sayeth, "Lo !
He taketh such and maketh them to flourish
 and to grow ;"

A Good Confession 211

For He's not a man that He should judge by
seeing of His eyes,
He's not a Son of man that He should any one
despise ;
He's God Himself,¹ *and far too kind for that,*
and far too wise.

He's God Himself, come down from Heaven to
raise us when we fall ;
He's come to heal us when we're sick, to hear
us when we call ;
If He hadn't come to do us good, He wouldn't
have come at all.

And "Ask, He says, and I will give, and
knock, and I to you
Will open," Jesus says to us, and I know that
it is true,—
It isn't Him would say the things He doesn't
mean to do.

¹ The expressions in italics in this and in the following verses, referring to our Blessed Saviour, the author heard used by a very poor and extremely ignorant person.

212 A Good Confession

He didn't come to judge the world, He didn't
 come to blame,
He didn't only come to seek ; it was to save
 He came ;
And when we call Him Saviour, then we call
 Him by His name.

He sought for me when I was lost, He brought
 me to His fold ;
He doesn't look for much from me, for He
 doesn't need be told
I'm past eighty years of age, and yet but four
 years old !

July 30, 1872.



AN INVITATION

(Mission Hymn)

"This man receiveth sinners."

COME, hearts that are blighted and broken
and bruised ;

Come, spirits benighted, rejected, refused ;

Come, look on your Saviour ! Behold Him, He
stands

With a wound in His heart, and a world in His
hands.

Come now, ye transgressors through force and
through fraud ;

Come now, ye oppressors, and look on your Lord ;

Oh come, ye deceivers ; oh come, ye deceived ;

Come slave and come tyrant ; come, grieving
and grieved.

Come, men who are mighty to curse and revile ;

Come, women whose lips have forgot how to
smile ;

Come, bond-slaves, come sin-slaves, come
drunkards, come thieves ;
Come hither to Jesus ; 'tis such He receives.

Come, outcast, abandoned, of devils the prey ;
Come, now unto One that is stronger than
they ;
Come, dwellers in darkness ; come, neighbours
to hell,
Where man dare not enter, the Spirit can
dwell.

And fear not, though Legion should still be
their name,
Deeds nameless, deeds shameless, that bring
you to shame ;
Oh, fear not, poor sinners, let this be your
fear,—
To miss the kind Saviour who waits for you
here.

For all your distresses, excesses, and need,
His love and his pity unceasingly plead,
Your deepest demerit His blood can efface ;
Come, sinners, inherit the treasure of grace !

Yea, if there be any who bear a dark stain
On brow and on bosom, the blood-mark of Cain,
'Tis Abel who loves you, 'tis Abel who pleads ;
For the brother who slew Him He now inter-
cedes.

Come, kneeling before Him, adore Him, and
grow
More pure than the sunbeam, more white than
the snow ;
He chose you, come, choose Him your Saviour,
who died ;
Fear only to lose Him ; fear nothing beside !

September 8.



EVERLASTING LOVE

“COME and sit by my bed awhile, Jeanie ;
there's just a little space
Betwixt light and dark, and the fire is low and
I cannot see your face ;
But I like to feel I've hold of your hand, and
to know I've got you near,
For kind and good you've been, Jeanie, the time
that I've been here.

“Kind and good you've been, Jeanie, when all
was so dull and strange ;
I was left to myself, and was not myself, and
I seemed too old to change,
And I couldn't get framed to the House's ways ;
it was neither work nor play ;
It wasn't at all like being at home, and it
wasn't like being away.

“And the days slipt on and the years slipt on,
and I felt in a kind of dream,
As I used to do in the noisy school sewing a
long white seam ;

Everlasting Love 217

Sewing, sewing a long white seam the whole
of the summer day,
When I'd like to have been in the open fields
either at work or at play.

“ But now I feel as I used to feel in the summer
evenings cool,
When we bairns would meet at the end of the
street, or the edge of the village pool ;
Or like when I've stood at the gate to wait for
father home from the town,
And held him tight by the hand, or held my
mother tight by the gown.

“ And I feel to-night as I used to feel when I
was a little lass,
When something seemed alive in the leaves
and something astir in the grass ;
And all in the room seems warm and light, and
I'm pleased to go or to stay ;
But I've got a word in my heart, Jeanie, that's
calling me away.”

“ Oh, what have you seen, Nannie, have you
seen a blessed sight
Of angels coming to meet you ; have you heard
them at dead of night ? ”

218 Everlasting Love

“Oh, nothing, nothing like that, Jeanie, but
what saith the blessed Word?
God speaketh once, yea twice, unto man, when
never a voice is heard.

“And He’s given a word unto me, Jeanie—a
word and a holy thought
Of something I’ve never found upon earth, and
something I’ve always sought;
Of something I never thought that I’d find till
I found it in Heaven above;
It’s Love He has given to me, Jeanie, His
everlasting love.

“I’m old, Jeanie, poor and old, and I’ve had
to work hard for my bread;
It’s long since father and mother died, and ye
know I was never wed;
And the most of my life’s been spent in Place,
and in places where I have been,
If I’ve heard a little talk about love, it’s been
work I’ve mostly seen.

“And in summer the days were long and light,
and in winter short and cold,
Till at last I was good for work no more, for
you see I’m getting old;

And I knew there was nothing left for me but
to come to the House, and I cried,
But if I was not good for work, what was I
good for beside ?

“ And still when I went to chapel and church,
I heard of love and of love ;
It was something I hadn't met with on earth,
and that hadn't come down from above ;
It was something I'd heard of, but never seen,
that I'd wished for and hadn't found,
But I liked to hear of love and of love, it had
such a beautiful sound.

“ And I used to think, perhaps it was meant
for richer people and higher,
Like the little maid that sits at church beside
her father the Squire,
For the angels that always live above, or for
good folks after they die ;
But now it has come to me, I know it is nigh
and is very nigh.”

“ O tell me what you have seen, Nannie ; have
you seen a shining light ?
Have you heard the angels that harp and sing
to their golden harps at night ? ”

“ Oh, Jeanie, woman, I couldn't have thought
of such things as these if I tried ;
It was God Himself that spoke to me ; it was
Him and none beside.

“ It wasn't a voice that spoke in my ear, but a
Word that came to my soul,
And it isn't a little love I've got in my heart
when I've got the whole ;
It is peace, it is joy, that has filled it up as a
cup is filled to its brim ;
*Just to know that Jesus died for me,¹ and that
I am one with Him.*

“ It's love, Jeanie, that's come to me as nigh as
you're now, and nigher ;
It's love that'll never change, Jeanie, it's love
that'll never tire,
Though I'm old and I'm poor, and deaf, and
dark,—and the most of folks that I see,
Be they ever so kind I'd weary of them, or
they'd soon grow weary of me.

¹ “ *I knew that Jesus was my Saviour, and that
I was one with Him.* ” words used by an aged,
humble believer, in describing a manifestation
which had conveyed unspeakable peace to her soul,
at a time of great bodily weakness, and in the near
prospect of death.

“And this isn’t the House any more! it’s
Home, and I’m pleased to go or to stay ;
I’m not a woman weary with work, or a little
lass at play,
I’m a child with its hand in its father’s hand,
its head on its mother’s breast ;
It’s Christ, Jeanie, that’s bid me come to Him,
and that’s given me rest.

“And it isn’t little God’s given to me, though
He’s kept it to the end,—
It’s wealth that the richest cannot buy, that the
poorest can never spend ;
And I needn’t wait till I go to Heaven, for it’s
Heaven come down from above ;
It’s love, Jeanie, God’s given to me, His ever-
lasting love !”





“WHEN the wandering son had consumed his father’s substance, he returned home to sorrowfully announce himself: the father saith not, ‘Whence comest thou?’ or ‘Where is now all thy patrimony?’ but ‘Bring hither the new garment; kill the fatted calf; let us now rejoice; my son was dead and is alive.’ Here was a welcome home that might amaze him.

“Though we sometimes lose the nature of children, yet God doth never lose the name, nay, the nature of a father—a *name of privilege to His children*. He is not only a father, but *our father*, and that which is more, a father in heaven, that howsoever we are disturbed in earth, the comfort is we have a father in heaven.

“God is not such a one as Adam took Him to be, from whom when he had sinned he should fly and hide himself for fear; *but God is such a one to whom Adam and all that have sinned may have access with hope and love.*

“‘Mine iniquity is greater than can be forgiven.’ No, Cain, thou errest; God’s mercy is far greater, couldst thou ask mercy. Men cannot be more sinful than God is merciful, if with penitent hearts they will call upon Him.”—FROM AN OLD WRITER.

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